Canadian Ceramic Relief Murals:
Studio Craft and Architecture –
A Case Study of the Sturdy-Stone Centre Murals, 1975-1983

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ABSTRACT

Canadian Ceramic Relief Murals: Studio Craft and Architecture – A Case Study of The Sturdy-Stone Centre, 1975-1983

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The modernist Sturdy-Stone Centre's monumental ceramic mural project is the subject of this case study that examines its agency. Initiated in 1975 by the Saskatchewan government for their new Saskatoon office building it was commissioned in two stages and completed by 1983. Six designer/makers executed two exterior and six interior relief murals in a variety of styles, making this the largest and arguably most eclectic ensemble created by studio ceramicists for any building in Canada. Despite local interest at the time of its reception this remarkable project has remained at the periphery of art, ceramic, craft, and architectural discourses. To address the agency of these murals throughout their lives this study adopts an interdisciplinary approach that promotes their integration into architectural, ceramic, sculpture, and craft histories. It argues the decorative and ornamental aspects of these murals transmit intellectual content through their sensuality and visual and material delight.

The first section, "A Social and Material Complex," presents an overview of the development of this unique project as group formations, methodologically using a combination of sociology and material culture. These groups comprise the government with its attendant political and social agendas, arts and crafts organizations and their aesthetic concerns, and the physical unit created by the building and the murals. A particular concern is the implication of ceramics as the designated mural material.

The second section, "The Lives of the Murals," looks at the biography of each mural, arguing they emerged from and contributed to political and cultural ideologies active in Saskatchewan, including discourses of multiculturalism and socialism. Each chapter combines the biographies of the murals with those of their makers, from their commissioning to their installation. An important aspect in each discussion is the co-constitution of the murals and their makers, as suggested by a postphenomenological approach. This involves taking into account a variety of group formations involving, among other things, materials, technology, tools,

architectural spaces, humans, and ideas. As agents these murals promote the professionalism of ceramic practices and dialogically address issues touching the rural and urban, local and global, vernacular and modern, and fine art and folk craft.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about ceramic relief murals: what they do, and how they achieve it. I focus on a particular project, the Sturdy-Stone Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan that involves a modernist building decorated with two exterior and six interior monumental ceramic relief murals. Initiated by the provincial government in 1972 to accommodate government offices and provide a ground floor retail space, this project took eleven years to complete from the conception of the building to the installation of the last mural in 1983, lasting almost the entire two mandates of premier Alan Blakeney's New Democratic Party government (1971-1982). The murals involved in this project include: two monumental exterior murals on the Sturdy-Stone Centre's west and east façades executed by Jack Sures and Randy Woolsey/Gregory Hardy, respectively; Lorraine Malach's *Untitled* mural in the lobby; and five mural projects above the elevators on the building's five office floors, including Victor Cicansky's *Old Working Class* and *New Working Class,* first and ninth floors respectively, Robert Billyard's *Prairie Themes,* second floor, Lorraine Malach's *Untitled* eighth floor, and Randy Woolsey's *Untitled* tenth floor.[1] Negative reviews from the architectural press described the building as "an overbearing concrete presence…looking like a clumsy amalgamation of the Boston City Hall and the University of Lethbridge [that] bodes ill for the province's architectural future."[2] However, the eclectic decorative program, unified by the use of a single material, ceramics, and by one theme, the celebration of Saskatchewan life, was considered successful by the local press. Each of the six Saskatchewan artists interpreted the theme in a unique manner ranging from abstract to folk art to beaux-arts architectural embellishment. The changing use of this building and its ambivalent reception since opening contribute to this discussion of the "crafting of space."[3] My dissertation asks the following questions: How can current interdisciplinary approaches open up discursive space for the production and reception of the mural program of Saskatoon's Sturdy-Stone Centre? How did these ceramic murals contribute to changing Canadian identities through their

[1] Floors three to seven are reserved for above-ground parking in the Sturdy-Stone Centre, accessible by an exterior ramp, with elevator access to the building on each of these levels.
[2] Trevor Boddy, "Prairie Architecture Examined: Boomtown Urban Design," *Canadian Architect* 24, no.10 (Oct. 1979): 39.
[3] Sandra Alfoldy and Janice Helland, "Introduction," in *Craft, Space and Interior Design: 1855-2005,* ed. Sandra Alfoldy and Janice Helland, (Hampshire, England and Vermont: Ashgate Press, 2008): 2.

positions within the cultural, political, and social discourses at the time of their production and installation? Can and should their cultural, social and political roles be re-evaluated? To answer these questions I have used a variety of research strategies including: accessing public, corporate, and private archives; interviewing the people involved in person, on the telephone, by letter, or through email exchanges, including the muralists (or their friends in the case of the deceased Lorraine Malach), the supervising architect, the masonry contractor, Saskatchewan Arts Board liaison officer, and labourers who worked on the murals; studying art, craft, architectural, and building journals; reading histories of Saskatchewan, western immigration, craft, ceramics, decorative arts, applied arts, architecture, tiles, art, and craft.

These murals were commissioned and created within the post-1945 push to reintegrate the allied or applied arts into the spaces of architectural modernism. However their inclusion into the spaces of art and craft discourse fell behind their reintegration into these physical locations; for medium specific works this was even more the case. Art and craft historians have only recently turned their attention to the applied arts and murals of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, looking to new scholarship in sociology, anthropology, and material culture through which to tackle them.[4] Recently, a few scholars of the decorative arts, crafts, and applied arts of the second half of the twentieth century have included the rare ceramic mural example within their examinations of a wide range of applied arts assembled with a view to establishing a firm theoretical base for craft and applied arts discourse.[5] Applied arts in general and ceramic murals specifically do not appear in architectural histories of this period, despite the fact these murals were installed as permanent decorative additions to their architecture, essentially becoming part of the building. This study offers another approach to the existing scholarship: by turning to a case study of the Sturdy-Stone murals I take into consideration the medium specificity of the project in relation to its architectural place within its socio-political space, setting these into the

[4] Examples of this scholarship include: Elizabeth Cumming, "Patterns of life: the art and design of Phoebe Anna Traquair and Mary Seton Watts," in *Women Artist and the Decorative Arts 1889-1935: The gender of ornament,* ed. Bridget Elliott and Janice Helland, (Aldershot Eng. and Burlington Vermont" Ashgate, 2002), 15-34; Elaine Cheasley Paterson, "Decoration and Desire in the Watts Chapel, Compton: Narratives of Gender, Class and Colonialism," *Gender & History* 17, no.3, (Nov. 2005): 714-736; Janice Helland, "'Designful Beauty': sensuality, tea and gesso," in Alfoldy and Helland, 2008, 45-58; Jim Cheshire, "Space and the Victorian ecclesiastical interior," in Alfoldy and Helland, 2008, 27-43. David Brett looks at historic Islamic tiles among other decorative arts combining perception, psychology, and sociology in his theoretical approach. David Brett, *Rethinking Decoration: Pleasure and Ideology in the Visual Arts*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[5] Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007); Sandra Alfoldy, *The Allied Arts: Architecture and Craft in Postwar Canada,* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).

development of the professionalization of Canadian ceramics and the establishment of political, cultural and social identities in Saskatchewan. Through careful analyses of the murals' appearances, architectural site, fabrication processes, discursive positions within their makers' oeuvres, and reception we can come to better understand what the murals do for their building, their audiences, their makers, the provincial government as their client, and professional ceramics in Canada. Murals are not "just" decorative. Decoration functions to change perception, modifying how people interact with their space and with each other, and who in turn alter these spaces.[6] As such, these ceramic murals produce people as much as people produce them; they are materially, socially, and culturally significant, actively enmeshed in networks of group formations that impact on physical, social, cultural and political concerns.

My arguments trace the network of discursive categories and histories in which the Sturdy-Stone Centre murals are involved, and highlight the importance and even necessity of interdisciplinarity in theory and methodology required to recognize the multidisciplinary art practices that gave rise to them. These objects emerged from the confluence of a wide variety of expertise in activities such as painting, printing, potting, sculpture, drawing, gardening, and construction, and have been discursively included within modern art, folk art, craft, and applied art. My interdisciplinary approach takes into consideration the recent scholarly work of Glen Adamson and Sandra Alfoldy, craft historians and theorists who contend consideration be given to categorical affinities between craft and art and craft and architecture, respectively. Adamson argues despite modern art defining craft as the inferior "other," craft's particular characteristics as supplementary to art, defined by particular materials, and associated with skill, the pastoral, and amateur might also be its conceptual strengths.[7] Alfoldy discusses the convergent concerns between architecture and the allied arts that include: material, scale and form, ornament and identity, arguing for their affinities rather than differences.[8] These writers inform my case study

[6] Brent C. Brolin, *Architectural Ornament: Banishment and Return*, (New York: Norton, 2000); James Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003); Brett, 2005; Alfoldy and Helland, "Introduction," 2008.
[7] Adamson, 2007; Alfoldy, 2012.
[8] Alfoldy, 2012. In contrast to this interdisciplinarity, craft historian Wendy Landry supports the uniqueness of craft, highlighting skill, material, technique, tools, scale, and sensory engagement as essential elements that distinguish it from other cultural practices. She has enumerated thirteen aspects of craft that include the five I mention. Wendy Landry, "How Crafts Matter: Mapping the Terrain of Crafts Study," PhD Dissertation, Concordia University, 2010. Like Adamson and Alfoldy, Landry's approach stems from the lack of concern for craft objects and practices within art and architectural discourse.

by providing a framework to take into account characteristics of crafts that prove useful in validating these ceramic murals as material, process and product, through their integration into an architectural space and their reception as public art. My research project develops strategies to ensure the inclusion of these ceramic murals not only within the discourse of Canadian culture, but also within a broader framework applicable to a wide range of in situ ceramic murals. While I focus on objects made within a specific time and particular cultural/social/political context, my aim is to develop a rigorous approach that can be applied to other such objects within their own contexts. To achieve this I turn to material culture, anthropology, and sociology as well as to art, craft, and architectural histories and theories, expanding the object concerns of these disciplines. In order to answer the questions that such an interdisciplinary journey invokes, I also integrate ceramic history, phenomenology, postphenomenology, and Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

Architecture and Art

These ceramic murals function as autonomous works, as works integrated within the context of an artist's oeuvre, and as part of the whole decorative project; they are also physically part of the building with its own architectural context. Closely aligned to an architecture that ostensibly eschewed decoration while still needing it to humanize its faces and spaces, post-1945 ceramic murals were, however, generally overlooked in architectural discourse -this despite the fact that the murals were affixed to the building in a permanent manner. The applied arts were integrated into modern architectural spaces to address people's emotional needs as well as their physical ones. In Canada this argument can be traced to 1946 and re-appeared regularly throughout the 1950s and 1960s in publications of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC).[9] In 1947 the essay, "In Defense of Ornament," appeared and in 1949 another article called for murals as a "political art" that would serve to mark public buildings as "the property of the people…reminding them they are "in the presence of the very heart of the democratic system."[10] Ernest Mundt, art and architecture critic and historian, picked up the refrain a few years later, suggesting that "art as a communicative idiom" could be re-established if, in

[9] Harry Seidler, "Aesthetics in Modern Architecture," *Journal RAIC* 23, no.10, (1946): 245-249.
[10] G.H. Huntley, "In Defence of Ornament," *Journal RAIC* 26, no.8 (1947): 282-285; Paul Duval, "Murals – A Political Art," *Journal RAIC* 26, no.1 (Jan. 1949): 9.

conjunction with architects, a vocabulary of "contemporary symbolism" were developed within the artistic community of painters, sculptors and ceramicists.[11] *Canadian Art* also supported this movement, bemoaning modern architecture's use of the curtain wall that "fairly successfully destroyed every conception of embellishment which architecture, as an art, had inherited from the Renaissance."[12] The RAIC journal eventually instituted the Allied Arts medal to encourage such collaboration, and in 1965 initiated a regular applied arts column written by art critic Anita Aarons who focussed on the integration of art into architecture. Throughout her column and in other publications Aarons encouraged architects to consider, as part of their decorative program, the use of the applied or decorative arts in materials such as ceramics, glass and textiles, media she considered appropriate for autonomous art projects as well as for projects for interior decorators.[13] Both Mundt and Aarons considered clay a suitable material for architectural decoration as it had already proved itself fit for architectural embellishment in previous centuries as both decorative glazed tiling and sculptural terra cotta. However, its appropriateness within a modernist idiom had yet to be determined. As one architect lamented, how to integrate and what to integrate were endlessly debated questions.[14]

In the case of the Sturdy-Stone murals, the RAIC publication, *Canadian Architect,* published a damning review that discounted the building on aesthetic grounds, but completely ignored the eight murals, installed to improve its appearance.[15] Histories of modern Canadian architecture also disregard applied murals, and in the case of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, overlook the building as well.[16] Among the challenges facing ceramic murals in general was their categorization as decoration and their historic subordination in the architecture/applied art hierarchy. Architects demanded control over the decorative arts integrated into their built spaces. Only if decoration had been designed by architects, as were the early-twentieth century terra cotta works of Louis Sullivan or the glazed tiling of Auguste Perret, or at least had emerged from

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[11] Ernest Mundt, "The Arts in Architecture," *Journal RAIC* 29, no.6 (June 1952): 161-162.
[12] Editors, "Sculpture in Canada," *Canadian Art* 19, no.4 (July/Aug.1962): 269.
[13] Anita Aarons wrote her column for the *Journal RAIC* between 1965 and 1968. Anita Aarons, *Allied Arts Catalogue,* vol. 1 and vol.2, Toronto: Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 1966. 1968); Anita Aarons, *Art for Architecture: The Wall,* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1969).
[14] R.I.B.A. "Architecture and the Other Arts," *Journal RAIC* 35, no.5 (May 1958), 190.
[15] Boddy, 1979, 39.
[16] Leon Whiteson, ed, *Modern Canadian Architecture.* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1983); Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture,* vol. 2, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994).

a collaboration between architects and artists, was it recognized in architectural publications.[17] Eminent Canadian architect Hazen Sise was adamant the architect "must have the final word …[as] the architectural design process demands this control."[18] Complaints were made that many artists who received commissions for monumental public art were "surprisingly unaware of the aesthetic determinants of architecture and the theoretical base of architectural form" that should inform their contributions.[19] Aarons included communication between artists and architects and their clients as a regular subject of her monthly columns.[20] This case study of a mural program, one not controlled by the architects, addresses concerns regarding collaboration and communication among architects, clients and artists, and challenges the established architecture/applied art hierarchy defended by modern architects.

The Québec publication, *Architecture Bâtiment Construction*, focussed as it was on one geographic/cultural/political location, did regularly document the integration of murals within the modern architecture of the province throughout the late 1950s and into the 1960s. These projects were executed in close collaborations between architects and artists, often based upon personal relationships.[21] Focusing on this period, Québec public art historian Danielle Doucet has recently traced art world terminology applied to these murals in a wide variety of Québec publications, and documented a number of non-commemorative murals executed in several media, including ceramics. While she concerned herself with one province and covered a specific period, 1950-1962, the discursive slipperiness she discovered in mural terminology illustrates the difficulty of pigeonholing these objects, numerous as they were at the time.[22] This Sturdy-Stone Centre case study builds upon Doucet's documentation of terminology and Alfoldy's argument the allied arts and architecture must be considered for their affinities rather

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[17] Wim de Wit, ed. *Louis Sullivan: The Function of Ornament,* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986); Peter Collins, *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture*, 2nd ed., (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 182.

[18] Hazen Sise, "Letter from Montreal," *Canadian Art* 22, no.3 (May/June 1965): 51.

[19] James Murray, "On Architecture: The Role of the Architect," *Canadian Art* 19, no.3, (May/June 1962): 197.

[20] See for example: Anita Aarons, "The Integrators," *Architecture Canada* 43, no. 12, (Dec. 1966): 21-22; "The Integrators Speak Part 1," *Architecture Canada* 44, no. 1, (Jan. 1967): 17-19; "The Integrators Speak, Part 2," *Architecture Canada* 44, no. 2, (Feb. 1967): 21-22; "Art and Architecture: How to Commission a Work of Art," *Architecture Canada* 46, no.6 (June 1969): 22-25.

[21] Claude Vermette archives, private collection; Maurice Savoie interviewed by the author, 14 Oct. 2011.

[22] Danielle Doucet, "Art public moderne au Québec sous Maurice Duplessis: les oeuvres murales non commemoratives," Journal of Canadian Art History 19, no.2, (1998): 32-73; Danielle Doucet, "L'émergence d'oeuvres murales publiques non-commémoratives au Québec," Thèse, M.A., UQAM, 1998; Danielle Doucet, "Le Monde de l'Art Public Montréalais des Années Cinquante: Le Discours Critique Tenu sur La Production de l'Oeuvre Murale, 1950-Mai 1961," Thèse PhD, UQAM, 2011.

than differences. I situate these ceramic murals within architectural discourse, paying attention to their contribution to the architectural history of the city and the province through the juxtaposition of forms and materials, evaluating how architectural context also contributes to the reception of each mural and the mural project.

As the Sturdy-Stone Centre murals are still in-situ, attached to the walls for which they were conceived, and touted as examples of Saskatchewan public art, accessible to a wide audience, the terms "in situ" and "public" need clarification. American philosopher Hilde Hein critiques the term "public art" as a "crudely pragmatic and narrow definition" that "equates it with art installed by public agencies in public places and at public expense." [23] This is, in fact, how the murals have been represented in the media. Hein problematizes such a simplistic explanation by pointing out the public must be understood as diverse and constituted by a multiplicity of communities, arguing public funding, public location, and public interaction with the work do not actually legally guarantee its status as "public".[24] Recent scholarship has also problematized "in situ." Today, as architectural historian and theorist Miwon Kwon argues, "it often infers 'criticality' or 'progressivity,'" and frequently is contextualized within community construction, maintenance, and transformation.[25] According to Kwon, the term "in situ" embraces not only a physical condition of the art, but also a social, political and cultural condition.[26] To address these concerns I turn to Jane Rendell's idea of "critical spatial practice," coined to transcend the traditional dichotomous relationship between art and architecture and acknowledge how the object and the building together engage with the social and the aesthetic, the public and the private. Like Alfoldy, Rendell considers how each term of the art and architecture binary work through categories used in the other's definition.[27] I also make use of Rendell's distinctions among space, place, site, and location as different processes encountered in critical spatial practice. Rendell understands "space in connection to social relations…place as a single articulation of space…site as a performed place…[and] location …the physical position

[23] Hilde Hein, "What is Public Art?: Time Place and Meaning," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54, no.1, (Winter 1996): 4.
[24] ibid, 1-7.
[25] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: site-specific art and locational identity,* (Cambridge Mass. MIT Press, 2002), 1.
[26] Johanne Lamoureux, *L'art insituable: De l'in situ et autres sites,* (Montréal: Lieudit Collection Centre de Diffusion 3D, 2001) has affinities with Kwon.
[27] Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between,* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 6, 9.

of the artwork."[28] This is relevant as the murals emerge from a variety of locations, the clay mine through to the studio, including the kiln as a specific studio location, before they are finally mounted on the walls. But even this final location can be altered as a place if renovations occur impacting access to it.

The engagement of people with their architectural spaces and how they psychologically perform in the site was a key factor in the integration of the applied arts into architecture in the post-1945 years. Hence, based upon my own experience in encountering the Sturdy-Stone Centre murals as I moved around and through the building, I consider how other people might encounter them, turning to phenomenology as developed by philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and postphenomenology recently modified by technology philosopher Peter-Paul Verbeek. The effectiveness of a phenomenological approach is suggested by craft historians Sandra Alfoldy and Janice Helland who argue for the agency of crafts in architectural spaces: "craft controls, manipulates, organizes and defines space – … the relationship between craft and space as a communication of related parts combines to form a united whole."[29] I argue these murals perform in space, space performs in relation to them, and people perform in spaces through these inter-relationships. My application of phenomenology to the Sturdy-Stone Centre derives as well from British urban anthropologist Claire Melhuish's interpretive study of a concrete megastructure erected in the brutalist style in London, 1968-72. Not only are its materials similar to the Sturdy-Stone Centre, both are multi-purpose buildings including a shopping area. While the buildings do differ in several ways, Melhuish's approach suggests that in any discussion of space, place, or site we acknowledge the social and psychological impact of these concrete modernist buildings and their decoration on the people who access the space.[30] Phenomenology has likewise been applied to analyses of site-specific sculpture, but public art theorist Miwon Kwon has critiqued this approach in its more traditional expression, as not taking into account the social and political elements involved within the installation and reception of the sculptures.[31]

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[28] Rendell, 2008, 29, 20.
[29] Alfoldy and Helland, 2008, 4.
[30] Clare Melhuish, "Towards a Phenomenology of the Concrete Megastructure," *Journal of Material Culture* 10, no.1 (2005): 5-29. Other architectural studies that turn to phenomenology also support my argument: a discussion of the materiality of modernism and its implications for lived-in space and a plea for interdisciplinarity in architectural history. John Archer, "Social Theory of Space: Architecture and the Production of Self, Culture and Society," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64, no.4 (Dec. 2005): 430-433; Victor Buchli, "Architecture and Modernism," in *Handbook of Material Culture,* ed. Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer, (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006), 254-266.
[31] Kwon, 2002.

Rendell's approach is helpful here as it acknowledges how the object and the building together can engage with the social, aesthetic, and political. Canadian public art historian Annie Gérin suggests "by shaping into durable materials versions of history to be consumed by future generations, memory in the guise of public art always looks forward."[32] I argue the eight Sturdy-Stone murals affixed onto their building bring together multiple histories, and as individuals and a collective contribute to a vision of Saskatchewan that is thrust into the future. The Sturdy-Stone murals' material, themes, and artistic vocabularies work within the architectural space of their locations to create multivocal conversations, sometimes raucous and contentious, and sometimes harmonious, but always changing with time and the shifting public audience. This project is to listen.

Material and Craft

In this project, I argue the material of murals within their architectural spaces can be relevant to the formation of their sociability; as such a consideration of ceramics, the specifically chosen material for these eight murals, is fundamental to this mural project study. Based upon ANT, I understand sociability as establishing connections involved in a re-association and reassembling of a variety of elements, the formation of groups that function as agents to effect or affect some action. In this sense sociability refers to the "process of connection," emphasizing agency, and these processes of connection are examined in terms of the biographies of the murals from the initial clay material to finished ceramic object.[33] Ceramics, or clay in its unfired state, is discursively slippery and malleable, much like the raw material itself. It is usually regarded as a craft material, but can sometimes be understood as art when executed as a monumental public mural and produced by professional ceramicists, themselves operating through institutions representing both the fine art and craft communities. My discussion of ceramic murals stresses the discursive complexity and cultural implications of ceramics by taking into account the history of clay, and ceramics as its transformed product, in Saskatchewan. This consideration for the raw material derives from anthropological approaches that take physical origins of materials

[32] Annie Gérin, "Introduction: Off Base," in *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Annie Gérin and James S. McLean, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 12.
[33] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory,*
(Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Latour draws upon the work of Gabriel Tarde who postulated social implied a "process of connection," Latour, 2007, 15.

into account in the social life of an object, particularly the work of Thierry Bonnot who investigated the social life of pots from a French pottery, starting from the clay that made them.[34] Studies such as Bonnot's, based upon the idea of the social and cultural lives of things, bring our attention to what objects do and how they form society and people. Moving beyond earlier accounts that emphasized technique and style, recent craft and material culture scholars have approached ceramics through social and cultural histories, but the vast majority of these are concerned with portable vessels or figurines.[35] Discussions of architectural ceramic tiling are primarily comprised of stylistic taxonomies.[36] Within the last few years, scholars such as Adamson, Alfoldy, and Doucet have included tiles, bricks, and ceramic sculpture as examples to develop conceptual categories.[37] This research contributes to our understanding of ceramics, the people who made and consumed them, and their contribution to the spaces in which they are found, but this dissertation offers another approach: a close case study of one group of ceramic murals in one particular site specifically taking into account the implications of their "ceramicness."[38]

Unlike Canadian ceramicist and theoretician Leopold Foulem, whose aim in coining the term "ceramicness" was to define ceramics as a generic group, I use it to address the physical material of clay, the processes involved in its transformations, and the histories attached to these.

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[34] Thierry Bonnot, *La Vie Des Objets: d'ustensils banals à objets de collection,* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2002). Although the murals are not banal objects, the relevance of looking at the raw material remains the same. This approach rests heavily upon the work of Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff. Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: commodities and politics of value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63; Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in Appadurai, 1986, 64-93. Concern for raw materials in terms of the history of an object is common in recent textile work in craft history and anthropology.

[35] Examples include: Brian Moeran, *Lost Innocence folk craft potters of Onta Japan,* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1984); Brian Moeran, Folk art potters of Japan: beyond an anthropology of aesthetics, (Surrey UK and Honolulu Hawaii: Curzon and University of Hawaii Press, 1997); John Chaimov, "Hummel Figurines: Molding a Collectible Germany," Journal of Material Culture 6, no.49, (March 2001): 49-66; Bonnot, 2002; Virginia Dellino-Musgrave, "British Identities through Pottery in Praxis: The Case Study of a Royal Navy Ship in the South Atlantic," *Journal of Material Culture* 10, no.3, (2005): 219-243; Adrienne Childs, "Sugar Boxes and Blackamoors: Ornamental Blackness in Early Meissen Porcelain," in *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain,* ed. Alden and Michael E. Yonan, (Surrey and Vermont: Ashgate, 2010), 159-177.

[36] Recent examples of these include: Ann Berendsen, ed., Janet Seligman trans., *Tiles: A General History,* (New York: Viking Press, 1967); Noël Riley, *Tile Art: A History of Decorative Ceramic Tiles,* (New Jersey: Chartwell, 1987; Hans Van Lemmen, *Tiles: 1,000 Years of Architectural Decoration,* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993; Gordon Lang, ed, *1000 Tiles: Ten Centuries of Decorative Ceramics*, (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004).

[37] Adamson, 2007; Alfoldy, 2012; Doucet, 2011.

[38] Leopold Foulem**, "**Ceramics Paradigms and Paradigms for Ceramics," Third Annual Dorothy Wilson Perkins Lecture, Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred University, October, 24, 2000*,* accessed 10 July, 2010, http://ceramicsmuseum.alfred.edu/perkins_lect_series/foulem/**.**

A study of *ceramic* murals entails an inquiry into the implications of the use of a specific material, and the exclusion of ceramic relief murals from art history texts justifies this reference to material specificity. Art history and theory have privileged other sculptural relief materials such as bronze and stone as carrying potent meaning; this inquiry into ceramics as a viable material to carry meaning in relief murals extends this discourse.[39] Recognition of the meaning of clay as a material and the processes of working and transforming it into ceramics is widespread within anthropological texts dealing with non-Western ceramic practice, an approach just now considered a possible means of inquiry into contemporary Western ceramic theory.[40] Ironically, just as Western art and craft discourses are becoming interdisciplinary, they are also concerned with the essentialism of materiality, a fear of the ghetto, especially within the context of traditional craft materials. I suggest such concerns threaten to censor a meaningful and "essential" path of inquiry for these murals. Archaeologist Bjørnar Olsen observes entities "possess their own unique qualities and completeness which they bring to our cohabitation (and co-constitution) with them."[41] Material is one of these qualities. This dissertation recounts how the mural makers, the contractor who mounted them, and their audience encountered these qualities in various manifestations and contexts. In architecture, a relevant example is found in Peter Collins' study of the impact of concrete as a building material on architectural form, particularly within the context of modernism.[42] I expand this approach, taking note of the implications of the culture of clay, as well as the culture of concrete, on the realization and reception of this project in general and of each mural individually.[43]

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[39] Michael Baxandall's work on limewood as a sculptural medium is, of course, an exception to the trend. Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). Likewise some craft historians and craft practitioners such as Janice Helland and Lutz Haufschild have recognized the implications of the particular aspects of materials and with their specific histories. Helland addresses gesso as an expressive decorative material in Helland, "Designful Beauty," 2008, and glass artist Lutz Haufschild the peculiarities of glass in Lutz Haufschild, "Inspired Light, Space Inspired: Thoughts About Light in Architecture." in *Common Ground:* Contemporary Craft, Architecture and the Decorative Arts, ed. Gloria Hickey, (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1999), 65-71.

[40] Examples include: Moeran, 1984; Moeran, 1997); Moira Vincentelli, *Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels.* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000); Moira Vincentelli, *Women Potters: Transforming Traditions,* (London: A& C Black, 2003).

[41] Bjørnar Olsen, "Scenes From a Troubled Engagement: Post-structuralism and Material Culture Studies," in Tilley et al, 2006, 92.

[42] Collins, 2004.

[43] The term "culture of clay" is derived from Adrian Forty's pairing of concrete with culture in Adrian Forty, *Concrete and Culture: A Material History,* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012).

Concern for the material limitations of craft practice is widespread in literature, often theoretically framed within an antimodernist approach, a traditionalist way of living in and understanding the world at odds with modernity. However, craft's critique of modernity can be interpreted too as part of a transformative modernity that integrates what is opposed to it.[44] The polarization of craft as modern or antimodern has recently been challenged by British historian Tom Crook who suggests a dialogic approach better explains the complexities of craft production, where "modern processes can, and often do, bring back into play their opposites."[45] In the post-WWII years, craft and architecture both looked to the past to create a better future, one that included craft works in spaces of modern architecture.[46] In assessing the sociability of these ceramic murals all made within the context of twentieth-century craft studio practices I turn to Crook's dialogic approach to acknowledge how the murals bring together an array of traditional practices from a variety of cultural sources, often themselves at odds with modernism. This is particularly useful in looking at styles of murals such as Billyard's *Prairie Themes* or Victor Cicansky's *New Working Class*, and approaches to making such as Randy Woolsey's *nerikomi* method or the Woolsey/Hardy exterior mural, nicknamed "The Caveman's Bible." Moreover, it resonates with the use of a vernacular material, clay, to decorate a modernist building. I build upon Crook's observation: "there can be no *precise*, or *definitive*, characterization of the relationship between craft and modernity, only recurrent reformulations of its dynamics, forms and meanings in specific times and places."[47] These murals, as a collective and as individual projects, are multifaceted sites that assemble in a dialogical relationship the local and the global, fine and folk art ideologies, craft practices and art vocabularies, tradition and improvisation, the rural and the urban, individualism and collaboration.

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[44] Lynda Jessup, "Anti-modernism and Artistic Expression: An Introduction," in *Antimodernism and Artistic Expression: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, ed. Lynda Jessup, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3-9; Tom Crook, "Craft and the Diologics of Modernity: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 2, no.1 (March 2009): 18.

[45] Crook, March 2009, 21. This complex position of crafts within modernity and numerous attempts to resolve it are seen in: Garth Clark, "The Death of Crafts" *Crafts,* no. 216 (Jan./Feb. 2009): 48-51; Garth Clark, "The Purist, The Symbolist, The Stylist: Utility in Contemporary American Ceramics," in *Shards: Garth Clark on Ceramic Art,* ed. John Pagliaro (New York: Distributed Art Publications, 2003), 409-426; Paul Mathieu, "But is it (Ceramic) Art? Ceramics and the 'Problem' with Jean-Pierre Larocque's Exhibition at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art," in *Craft: Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse*, Volume III, eds. Paula Gustafson, Nisse Gustafson and Amy Gogarty, (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Artichoke Publishing, 2007), 113-121; Paul Mathieu, "Towards a Unified Theory of Crafts: The Reconciliation of Differences," in *Craft: Perception and Practice, A Canadian Discourse,* Vol. II, ed. Paula Gustafson, (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Artichoke Pub., 2001), 195-203.

[46] Crook, 2009, 21.

[47] Ibid, 30.

Murals are not inert objects attached to walls: they share our physical space, transforming it and us, as they too are transformed in a reciprocal manner; they are integrated into a social network that includes human and non-human actors involved in establishing and reforming multiple and multifaceted groups: physical, social and political. This study of these ceramic murals created during this particular decade is significant as they were implicated in profound transformations in Saskatchewan society that caused them to be made and in which they participated. The murals themselves perform social tasks interwoven with ideologies, acting as agents to situate Saskatchewan within a modern industrialized world, while simultaneously reinforcing the importance of its rural legacy. As a critical spatial practice these monumental murals give a public face to the historic, industrial, architectural, political, and functional relevance of ceramics in Saskatchewan; as such I suggest ceramics as material and process has agency.

I attribute agency to an extensive array of social actors. This is methodologically supported by Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, also known as the sociology of associations that extends action to non-humans as well as humans and sets out parameters to trace how they form social aggregates.[48] The range of actors necessary to this project include: a variety of raw materials, the skills involved in their manipulation, tools and equipment, weather, studio space, educational institutions, people, professional organizations, geographical locations, and media. These come together in collectives that comprise many and various combinations of these actors. This approach reflects a need to acknowledge the wide-ranging aspects of ceramic knowledge and production, including technical, practical, and ideological concerns. It takes into account my own practical experience as a ceramic muralist over three decades and recently teaching ceramic history to university students that has made me aware of the complex interplays involved in mural fabrication and the perception of what they do. Hence I follow Latour's counsel to "follow the actors themselves."[49] Through this approach I can recognize the agency of the wet summer of 1977 that facilitated the slow drying time required for the Woolsey-Hardy mural, the nesting patterns of birds and the thermal expansion of ice that required Jack Sures to redesign his tiles, and how construction techniques determined the final form of Cicansky's *Old Working Class.* Above all my experience informs my need to contribute to the development of a

[48] Latour, 2007. Latour sees sociology as a verb rather than a noun.
[49] Ibid, 12.

discourse that acknowledges such a rich body of work.[50] Social anthropologist Tim Ingold points out the theorist "*makes through thinking*" while the craftsman "*thinks through making.*" I hope this dissertation acknowledges the latter as well as the former, in what Ingold calls the practice of "an *art of inquiry*."[51]

However, while this project takes into account a wide variety of agencies, as a ceramicist myself I am also aware that things and people and things and things come together in action, and it is at this interface that agency occurs. Implicated in this is the social and cultural construction of the senses in our apprehension, judgement, and interaction with the world, linked to phenomenological approaches to sculpture, architecture and material culture studies. Sensory studies, a new anthropological field developed by Canadian scholars David Howes and Constance Classen argues for awareness of the roles the senses play in how we perceive and produce the world, and equally how our sensory perception of the world is culturally constructed.[52] Sensory perception informed by culture impacts how ceramicists engage with clay and how the audience perceives the completed work. To understand how we make the murals work and how the murals make us through our visual, tactile, and kinaesthetic engagements, I turn to postphenomenology that suggests the object and subject are co-constitutive at their interfaces. As explained by Verbeek: "Postphenomenology can be viewed as an offshoot of phenomenology that is motivated by the postmodern aversion to context-independent truths and the desire to overcome the radical separation of subject and object, but that does not result in relativism."[53] Verbeek argues objects and things co-constitute one another through the interaction of long and short chains of associations, which conceptually relates to Latour's network. While the immediate interface of things with things or persons with things constitutes

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[50] Another practitioner/scholar who recognizes the complexity of the process involved in the making and reception of craft objects is textile artist and craft educator Wendy Landry who points out craft knowledge involves "technical, practical, and functional ideas." Landry, 2010, 2. Landry also framed her research as a case study, which involved her learning the technique of velvet weaving.

[51] Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 6-7.

[52] David Howes, ed. *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses,* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1991); David Howes, *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003); David Howes, ed. *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader,* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005); Constance Classen, ed, *The Book of Touch*, (Oxford: Berg, 2005). A key example of this kind of interdisciplinarity is seen in the application of material culture studies to textile construction and use, including its interface with the body that addresses how social, political, cultural, and gender identities are inextricably mingled with material practices.

[53] Peter-Paul Verbeek, *What Things Do: Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency, and Design,* (Pennsylvania: University State University Press, 2005), 113.

the short chain where an action occurs, the long chains are comprised of many events that happen previous to that conjunction, effectively causing it.[54] This approach reconciles phenomenology and Actor-Network Theory,[55] resulting in the idea of subject/object co-constitution, where both remain as actors. Artistic intentionality is removed as originating only in the maker and relocated at a variety of enmeshed interfaces such as people and tools, techniques and space. Verbeek's argument takes into consideration the interplay of a wide variety of things and processes, and is interested in the human-human relations that arise.[56] Through this I unpack the agency of the murals within chains of associations that concern interactions among raw materials, technology, objects, people, texts, time, institutional structures, artistic vocabulary (style) and historical contexts. Skill involved in the coming-into-being of the murals is one of these concerns.

As an attribute of craft, and perhaps still its primary definition, skill has been interpreted as a limiting factor to craft's conceptual significance. It has even been seen as a detriment to the development of a "critical and theoretical framework" for craft discourse because it purportedly restricts discussion of craft to the "sensory" or "experiential," and materials and techniques.[57] My discussion of the Sturdy-Stone murals argues for the integration of the maker's skills and techniques as acquired body and intellectual knowledge of materials, tools, processes, and space, [58]fundamental to understanding the various agencies of these objects. I rely upon recent scholarship developed in the disciplines of material culture, sociology, archaeology and anthropology. Olsen suggests we consider Heidegger's principles of readiness-to-hand, where the person and her tool are momentarily fused as a unit through action that dissolves the subject/object boundary, and present-at-hand, where the contemplated object stands apart from whomever is studying it, as points on a continuum rather than as oppositional, a "coming-to mind". This approach opens up a more subtle way of addressing the levels of skill involved in manipulating tools and applying and modifying the numerous techniques each ceramicist

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[54] Verbeek, 2005.
[55] Latour opposed Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology as he claimed it privileged the subject. Latour, 2007, 60.
[56] Verbeek, 2005, 164-168.
[57] Harold Risatti, *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression,* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 2-3; Janet Koplos, "What is This Thing Called Craft?" *American Ceramics* 11, no. 1 (1993): 12-13; While admittedly writing for a technical journal, Canadian muralist Connie Glover only ever published on the technical aspects of creating and installing her mural at the Cozmo Plaza, Vancouver in Connie Glover," 'Rising Tide': A Canadian Mural Project," *Ceramics Technical,* no. 12 (2001): 10-13.
[58] Bjørner Olsen, *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*, (Lantham Maryland: Altamira Press, 2010), 164.

adopted and adapted in the making these murals.[59] With concerns similar to Verbeek's emphasis on interactive sites, Olsen recognizes that objects emerge from processes of interaction between materials and practices, pertinent in this study to how each of the muralists approached their tasks.[60] Social anthropologist Tim Ingold teases apart the association of skill with tradition. Arguing creativity arises as much from tradition as rupture from it, he suggests rather than privilege the idea of innovation that suggests a break with the past we should honour the creativity of improvisation that is based upon already acquired skills, extending and modifying them. He distinguishes improvisation that "characterizes creativity by way of its processes," from innovation that evaluates creativity "by way of its results."[61] I argue the foam space boots invented by Randy Woolsey to walk across the four thousand square foot surface of wet clay assembled for his monumental exterior mural, or the *soba* noodle "rolling pin" to form his tenth floor mural, and Jack Sures' newly designed tools and equipment to realize his west façade exterior mural relied upon improvisation: these creative solutions were built upon established traditions. Ingold succinctly points out "materials think in us as we think through them."[62]

Clay as a material and ceramics as its transformed product have been difficult for serious sculptural discourse to assimilate. Implying its limitations in art discourse centuries ago, the eighteenth-century German art theorist Johann Winckelmann assessed clay as a preparatory material for sculpture that was to be finally realized in stone, gypsum, or bronze.[63] In 1931 Herbert Read argued sculpture is defined by "material and technique: the art of carving or cutting a material of relative hardness," a definition that effectively excludes working in soft clay as sculpture.[64] Ceramic sculpture in postwar North America was only seen as marginally relevant during the 1960s with the arrival of avant-garde ceramic practices on the American west coast that included the New Ceramics and Ceramic Funk movements.[65] In Canada, the 1982

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[59] Verbeek, 2005, 194.
[60] Olsen, 2010, 153;
[61] Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam, "Creativity and Cultural Improvisation: An Introduction," in *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation,* ed. Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam, (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2000), 2.
[62] Ingold, 2013, 6. This approach actually was applied in a previous case study of pottery wheel throwing by neuroarchaeologist Lambros Malafouris. Lambros Malafouris, "At the Potter's Wheel," in *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach,* eds. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris, (New York: Springer, 2008), 19-36.
[63] Johann Joachim Winckleman, *The History of Ancient Art,* trans. G. Henry Lodge, (Boston: J.R. Osgood, 1872), 79.
[64] Herbert Read, *The Meaning of Art,* 2nd ed. (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1934), 214.
[65] Garth Clark, *American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present,* (London: Booth-Clibborn, 1987); Gail Crawford, *Studio Ceramics in Canada,* (Toronto: Gardiner Museum of Ceramics and Fredericton New Brunswick: Goose Lane

Saskatchewan ceramic exhibition *Issues in Clay: Western Canadian sculpture* was mounted as a disruptive strategy in Canadian sculpture tradition.[66] Apparently this was not effective, as clay, and for that matter other mediums associated with craft, were still not included in the latest Canadian art historical tome, *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century.*[67] Clay as a material is often associated with the pastoral and the amateur, education and rehabilitation, labels that have not been attached to serious professional sculpture, and, as are other craft practices and mediums, frequently considered anti-modern.[68] In 1983, the year the Sturdy-Stone mural project was finally completed, Kay Woods in *Arts West* evaluated the situation for public Canadian sculpture as improved due to increased government support coupled with the construction boom, but went on to say that in order "to be truly representative of the era" twentieth-century sculpture "has had to explore new methods, new materials and new technology."[69] This emphasis on innovation, in Ingold's terms, infers that as a sculptural material, clay was either vernacular or obsolete.

Ironically, within the last few years some potters have even argued ceramics should be a category for vessels alone. Ceramic/clay sculptors have thus had to defend their choice of material, technique, or style against criticism from both sculpture and ceramic discourses in which logically they should be included.[70] While this marginalizes clay sculpture, relief murals are completely absent in this debate: within professional ceramic discourse they have almost become an invisible production.[71] In his contribution to what constitutes the category of ceramics, Canadian scholar and ceramicist Paul Mathieu does include tiles, along with the vessel and figurine, based on a common characteristic, containment. Under these terms it is possible ceramic murals can be validated, but only if each category does not become too restrictive. My approach is not to limit discursive categories for ceramic murals, but open them up to interdisciplinarity so these objects become visible to ceramic and sculpture histories.

Editions, 2005; Mary Davis MacNaughton, *Clay's Tectonic Shift: 1956-68,* (Claremont California: The J.Paul Getty Museum and Scripps College, 2012.

[66] Latitude 53 Society of Artists, *Issues in Clay: Western Canadian sculpture: an exhibition presented by Latitude 53 Society of Artists*, (Edmonton, Alberta: Latitude 53 Society of Artists, 1982).

[67] Brian Foss, Sandra Paikowsky, and Anne Whitelaw eds. *The Visual Arts in Canada: the twentieth century,* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[68] Adamson, 2007; Jessup, 2001, 3-9;

[69] Kay Woods, "Sculpture in Canada," *Arts West* 9, no.3, (March 1983): 12.

[70] Examples of this include Mathieu, 2007; Tony Marsh, "Thoughts on Ceramic Sculpture," *Studio Potter* 34, no.1 (Dec. 2005): 39-41; Ian Anderson, "'Ceramic Sculpture' Letter to the Editor," *Studio Potter* 34, no.2 (June 2006): 7.

[71] A rare exception is Glover, 2001.

As a discursive category, craft is also regularly defined in terms of its materials, and clay is one of these. While current craft theoreticians struggle to move beyond what craft historians Sandra Alfoldy and Janice Helland call "material confines," the material of objects, as well as the method by which they are made, is still a potent agent in discourse.[72] I contend a medium-based focus is highly relevant to my project, as different craft media carry their own meanings intrinsic to their source, transformation, manipulation, and use: material is an integral part of the life of any object and of its maker. In other words, while I do not essentialize craft, I recognize the pertinence of a ceramicist's choice to work with clay and the meaning imbued in the final result because of its ceramic nature. However I do not attempt to tease apart "ceramicness" as a separate genre in the art worlds, as has Canadian ceramic sculptor and theorist Leopold Foulem.[73] American Ceramic sculptor Tony Marsh made the point for his choice of clay eloquently:

> I know that some materials offer too much resistance for me to work with well, but clay offers choices. Perhaps more important and engaging to me about the material is that it is transformative. It is capable of moving from soft to hard in texture, dark to light in color and from large to small in scale. As one works the material shifts from powder to liquid, plastic and stone, and offers ever-changing opportunities to engage it in different ways. Lastly, clay is a great recorder of all that happens to it, and its plasticity allows the easy building of both organic and hard edged geometric forms. I find the phenomenon of heat's transformation of ceramic materials particularly fascinating… After many years and numerous attempts at expression with other materials, it is in clay that I have found a "material voice" that I feel I can activate naturally and in ways that interest me.[74]

The particularities of different craft media in expressing ideas and forming personhood have been effectively recognized for wood, gesso, glass, ceramic vessels, and particularly textiles.[75] In fact, today's art theoretical discourse that shifts away from a discussion of medium-based works, contributes to the marginalization of medium-based practices to which these murals belong. I argue for a consideration of the interwoven implications of the choice of clay for the object, muralist, architect, client, and audience. My project respects the importance of ceramics as a

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[72] Alfoldy and Helland, "Introduction," 2008, 2.
[73] Foulem**,** 2000**.**
[74] Marsh, 2005, 39.
[75] Within art historical discourse, an excellent example of this is Baxandall, 1980. In terms of craft and decorative art discourse examples include: Bonnot, 2002; Karen Tranberg Hansen, "Fashioning: Zambian Moments," *Journal of Material Culture* 8, no.3 (2003): 301-309; Helland, "'Designful beauty,'" 2008; Haufschild, 1999; Myriem Naji "Gender and Materiality In-The-Making: The Manufacture of Sirwan Femininities Through Weaving in Southern Morocco," *Journal of Material Culture* 14, no.1 (2009): 47-73.

medium, using it as a vital artistic, social, cultural, and even political and ideological component of the murals I address, therein challenging modernity's dichotomies, hierarchies, and exclusions.

Ornament and Decoration

The eight ceramic murals decorate the Sturdy-Stone Centre in much the same way the building was meant to decorate the city, but in fact without its own decorations the building was not considered an ornament of the city.[76] At the time of the making and mounting of these murals, art theoreticians such as Ernest Gombrich were re-introducing a discussion of ornament and decoration into art discourse. Using an interdisciplinary approach, Gombrich relied upon psychology, anthropology and archaeology in his culturally, geographically, temporally and stylistically far-ranging treatise.[77] In 1982, just before completion of the last ceramic murals, American architects Robert Jensen and Patricia Conway introduced "Ornamentalism," a post-modern approach to ornament and decoration within architecture. Appealing to the avant-garde and reversing modernist hierarchies, they defined it as "a radical act, quite the opposite of the conservative act it had been for most of the century," and applauded decoration's "fascination with the surface of things as opposed to their essence; elaboration as opposed to simplicity; borrowing as opposed to originating; sensory stimulation as opposed to intellectual discipline."[78] Humour, folk art, pattern, colour, symbolism, and the handmade, all characteristics of Ornamentalism, were also aspects of the Sturdy-Stone murals.[79] While Jensen and Conway's examples were drawn from American avant-garde design and architecture, the resurgence of interest in decoration does place the Sturdy-Stone Centre project on the cusp of change. However, a problem with this promising approach is its opposition between sensory stimulation and intellectual discipline, an opposition that continues to haunt Ornamentalism today, associating it with artificiality, triviality and superficiality, rather than intellectual content.[80]

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[76] As discussed in Chapter 2, the Saskatoon city councillors refused to approve the government's proposed design of the Sturdy-Stone Centre without some relief murals on its east and west façades.
[77] E.H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art,* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979).
[78] Robert Jensen, and Patricia Conway, *Ornamentalism: New Decorativeness in Architecture & Design,* (New York: C.N. Potter, 1982), 1, 2.
[79] Ibid, 1-21.
[80] Hugh Pearman, "While Richard Rogers is being fêted, high-tech style is being left behind," *The Sunday Times,* May 11, 2008, accessed 28 May 2008.

Design historian James Trilling reiterates this dichotomy, arguing we consider "[o]rnament [as] decoration in which the visual pleasure of form significantly outweighs the communicative value of content."[81] This present study recognizes the sensuality and playfulness of ornament but, drawing upon the work of British Renaissance scholar Andrew Morrall, argues sensory stimulation and intellectual discipline are enmeshed, each growing from and contributing to the other.[82] How Malach uses pattern and decoration in her lobby and tenth floor murals, or Billyard in *Prairie Themes,* are integral to the social implications of these works, affecting what they say and how the audience receives them.

Architectural historian Mark Wigley has tackled the gendered opposition between form and decoration that adds femininity to the list of artificiality, triviality and superficiality. Challenging modernist architecture's claim to have escaped fashion and decoration, Wigley undresses modernist architecture's white wall speculating that its painted whiteness actually clothes its surface, suggesting the white wall is in fact disciplined femininity.[83] Wigley's approach brings our attention to the Tyndall stone cladding added to the concrete Sturdy-Stone Centre to enhance its surface, and necessary for the display of the exterior ceramic murals presented like modern paintings decorating a gallery wall. Recently Trilling set himself the task of eliminating the disparaging term "mere decoration" arguing: "All ornament is decoration, but not all decoration is ornament. Decoration is the most general term for the art we add to art. Used this way it implies no judgment…on the quality or seriousness of the work."[84] He asks if the restoration of ornament to modernist architecture can be justified, suggesting we need to look "beyond the conceptual framework of modernism."[85] Offering such an alternative, the dialogical approach that informs this thesis takes into consideration interfaces and interactions, enmeshments and networks that operate beyond modernism's binaries, opening up a new space

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http://entertainment.timesonline.co/uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/visual_arts/architecture_and_design/article3889733.ece . Pearmen likened the "new ornamentalism" in architecture to "doodling."

[81] Trilling, 2003, 23.

[82] Andrew Morrall turns to a late Renaissance object to argue for the relevance of ornament as "a potentially important branch of social experience," aligning it with "the interests of social and cultural history." He sees the task of art history to be "the elucidation of the production, meaning and reception of works of art and craft by a careful inductive examination within a context of contemporary documentation." Andrew Morrall, "Ornament as Evidence," in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources,* ed. Karen Harvey, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 63, 64.

[83] Mark Wigely, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, (Cambridge Mass. and London Eng.: MIT Press, 1995).

[84] Trilling, 2003, 23.

[85] Ibid, 231.

for ornament and decoration through which I argue the murals' visual pleasure and intellectual, social, and political content are co-constitutive. According to Trilling ornament never really disappeared from modernism, but was redefined within an aesthetic of indeterminacy: ornament is allied to the origins of the material itself and the techniques of its formation into an object, an argument closely related to aesthetics and practices of much modern art.[86] I apply this observation to these ceramic relief murals where the finished works particularly speak of their raw materials and processes of fabrication, especially evident in the unglazed murals such as Victor Cicansky's *Old Working Class*, Jack Sures' west façade mural, and Woolsey's tenth floor murals.

Design historian David Brett also argues for the sensual delight of ornament and decoration, approaching it from a multidisciplinary angle that draws upon physiology, psychology, and sociology. For Brett ornament and decoration is a "family of practices" devoted mainly to visceral pleasure and "a family of values which includes social recognition, perceptual satisfaction, psychological reward and erotic delight." He recognizes these values are "public" as the works from which they arise are in the public's view, but they also fall in the private sphere because they are experienced by individuals within their own set of practices and needs.[87] Like Trilling, Brett distinguishes ornament as the smaller category within the larger one of decoration: ornament means to complete or fit out, whereas decoration is a generic descriptor of things mainly pertaining to pleasure and not dependent upon material or technique. Using visual ideology, Brett looks to how, through decorative strategies, the display of power, money and sex has social implications, in other words, what is displayed and how is important to establish and modify social connections.[88] Through his interdisciplinary approach, he counters decoration's pejorative labels of triviality, frivolity, and superficiality subsuming them under innate and irrepressible pleasurable bodily sensations. Brett's application of visual ideology to the decorative program of the Sturdy-Stone Centre complements my application of material ideology to this project. These decorative murals are attached to the building and in terms of the complete project bring together both decoration and ornament; some of the murals might fall more into

[86] Trilling, 2003, 217-222.
[87] Brett, 2005, 4. "Visual delight" in regards to decoration had been used as early as 1974 by British architectural historian Juian Barnard who gave many examples from the Victorian period on the: "exuberance and visual delight of decoration- the very element that has been rejected in architecture in the last fifty years." Julian Barnard, *The Decorative Tradition,* (London: The Architectural Press, 1974), 7.
[88]Ibid, 2005, 4, 5; Morrall, 47-66.

one than the other, with various degrees of repetitions of abstract forms but all work within visual and material ideologies. This scholarship informs how I speak to the integration of the Sturdy-Stone murals into their architectural and social spaces as both visual and material pleasure and intellectual content. These in turn impact on their agencies.

As decoration and ornament these murals all share a common characteristic, relief surfaces; however during the 1970s, relief sculpture was considered an art difficult to appreciate. Not only did it fall outside the privileged modern art categories of painting or freestanding sculpture, but as well philosophers ignored sculpture at this period in favour of other art forms such as "music, literature or painting."[89] In 1979 sculpture historian L.R. Rogers provided tools for appreciating both high and low reliefs, enumerating fundamental elements such as the importance of planes and registers, the use of contour and colour, quality of line, and the play of light and shadow. While not focussing on specific materials, and often not identifying them at all in this historic survey, he points out that relief is neither free-standing sculpture nor two-dimensional painting or drawing, falling somewhere in between. Within his many examples he included only one small ceramic relief, a Renaissance della Robbia work, a situation that points to the discursive marginalization of ceramics.[90] Rogers' awareness of the characteristics of relief sculpture contributes conceptual and perceptual tools to address both the high and low relief murals in the Sturdy-Stone Centre.

Even the term "mural" has an ambivalent place within art history and decorative art. While Renaissance frescoes are integrated into the art historical canon, later mural work has been trivialized or ignored. Throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, frescoes were considered ornament and decorative, often conflated with women's practices or decorative movements such as the "weak and languid" art nouveau.[91] Happily, feminist art historians have recently addressed such mural work providing models for integrating material, practice, artist, and architecture into mural studies.[92] In the second quarter of the twentieth century, contemporary painted murals in public locations were often historically or politically didactic, a

[89] L.R. Rogers, "Sculpture, Space and Being within Things," *British Journal of Aesthetics 23,* no. 2 (Spring 1983): 165.
[90] L.R. Rogers, Relief Sculpture: An Appreciation of the Arts/8, (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974). Rogers also rejected phenomenological approaches to sculpture. Rogers, 1983, 164-68.
[91] Brett, 207.
[92] Cumming, 2002; Paterson, 2005,; Helland, " 'Designful Beauty'," 2008,

style that was marginalized with the subsequent entrenchment of supposedly apolitical modern abstract art.[93] For murals, decoration *and* political content meant marginalization. Within a Canadian context, feminist recuperative projects have assured the relief murals of stone-carver Eleanor Milne's contribution to the Canadian Parliament Buildings, and Jacobine Jones' work on the Bank of Canada and Toronto's Bank of Montreal are noticed.[94] In both cases, applied to government and corporate buildings, these works are both political *and* decorative. This Sturdy-Stone mural project study is a small contribution to mural literature in general and to Canadian mural literature in particular.

Canadian ceramic artists such as Louis Archambault constructed relief murals in the 1950s but, due to the modernist renunciation of applied decoration, critical and theoretical discourse that could address the works lacked the richness accorded the decorative arts during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[95] Thus the place of the Canadian ceramic murals within decorative art, art, and architectural discourse was threatened. Twentieth-century trends to conflate the decorative and applied arts with design's clean lines and industrial practices, and categorize decorative arts primarily as portable objects compounded this.[96] The nineteenth and early-twentieth century practice of applied ornament and decoration, upon which much of the early decorative art discourse was built, was no longer appreciated nor considered relevant by mid-century. In fact the post-war justification for re-integrating the arts into architecture hinged upon the social/emotional role of the arts, rather than their aesthetic function that had so dominated nineteenth-century discourse.[97] The present case study, based on high-profile commissions attached to a significant government building, traces how the Sturdy-Stone muralists chose their murals' visual languages and content to respond to their combined tasks to

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[93] Duval, 1949, 9.
[94] Eleanor Milne *Captured in stone: carving Canada's past / R. Eleanor Milne*, (Manotick, Ont.: Penumbra Press, 2002); Natalie Luckyj, *Put on her Mettle: The Life and Art of Jacobine Jones,* (Manotick Ont.: Penumbra Press, 1999).
[95] Archambault designed and made an aluminum and ceramic freestanding mural for the Canadian pavilion at the Brussel's World Fair in 1958. Donald W. Buchanan, "Best Foot Forward in Brussels," *Canadian Art* 14, no.2, (Winter 1957): 64-67; Donald W. Buchanan, "Impressions of the Fair," *Canadian Art* 15, no.3, (Aug. 1958):182-187, 238-39.
[96] Isabelle Frank, "Introduction," in Isabelle Frank, ed. David Britt, trans. *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings 1750-1940*, (New York and London: Yale University Press for The Bard Graduate centre for Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York, 2000); Laurel Marguerite Putt "Decorative Arts in Canadian Public Art Museums," M.A. Thesis, Department of Art History, Concordia University, 1990, 6-25.
[97] Harry Seidler, 1946; Mundt, 1952. Frank's compilation of historical essays on the decorative arts covers these discussions thoroughly. Frank, 2000. Relevant essayists include Pugin, Ruskin, Morris, Jones, and Semper.

improve the social/emotional needs of their audience and consider the political desires of their client. Some murals were received as more politically focussed such as Cicansky's *Old Working Class* or Billyard's *Prairie Themes,* while others were seen to primarily convey delight, such as Malach's lobby mural.

This current research also contributes to the history of ceramic tiles, as all these murals, whether high or low relief, are a continuation of the architectural uses of relief ceramics for decoration. Early examples include the della Robbia family's representational white and polychrome high relief works executed during the Italian Renaissance, usually associated with religious themes and spaces,[98] a body of work Sturdy-Stone muralists Victor Cicansky and Lorraine Malach specifically cite as historical references. The decorative richness of Islamic tiling was recognized in European art in the eighteenth century with the rise of Orientalism. Low relief works composed of rhythmical repetitive abstracted designs, monochrome and polychrome, are found on and in British, European, and American buildings of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries executed within the context of the Arts and Crafts, Beaux Arts, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco movements.[99] Unfortunately, many exterior high-relief murals created as part of the architectural terra cotta movement in Britain and the United States, have recently fallen into disrepair and their very existence is threatened.[100] Despite the decline in production and appreciation for industrially made terra cotta throughout the last century, American terra cotta tile historian Susan Tunick points out a very limited renewed interest at mid-century in New York where some interesting polychrome projects were undertaken.[101] In Canada, architectural awareness of ceramic cladding increased after the mid-century, but new examples of sculptural terra cotta were few, primarily because of the ascendancy of modernist architecture with its interest in "modern" materials such as cement, metal, and glass, its advocacy of clean and unadorned lines and its reliance on the decorative nature of the materials arising from their own formation processes.[102] The revival of ceramic sculptural architectural decoration in

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[98] John Pope-Hennessy, *Luca della Robbia,* (Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, 1980).
[99] See: Berendsen 1967, Kurutz, 1989; Lang 2004, Riley 1987; Tunick, 1997.
[100] Susan Tunick, "Architectural Terra Cotta: Preserving the Inheritance," in *Ceramic Millennium*, ed. Garth Clark, (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2006), 176-185.
[101] Susan Tunick, *The Terra Cotta Skyline,* New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997; Susan Tunick, "The Reign of Terra Cotta in the United States: Enduring in an Inhospitable Environment," *APT Bulletin* 29, no.1 (1998): 43-48.
[102] Advertisements in *Architecture Canada* and *Architecture, Batîment, Construction* 1955 to 1985 attest to this interest. Tunick, 1998, 43, 44. Trilling, 2003. For pre-WWII remarks see Eckardt V. Eskesen, "Presidential Address

Canada was initiated within the studio pottery movement, particularly in Québec through the significant productions of Claude Vermette, Maurice Savoie, and Jordi Bonet in the 1950s through to the mid-1970s. The Sturdy-Stone Centre murals form part of this revival with its roots in studio pottery. In fact Vermette's concave repeated brick patterns of the 1960s have a visual affinity with Sures' undulating west façade mural, and the surface impressions and some relief elements of the Woolsey/Hardy mural of the east façade resonate with Savoie's low relief Eaton murals of the late 1960s.[103] While regionalism in Canada serves to promote local work that might otherwise fall beyond the purview of national publications, certainly the case with the Sturdy-Stone murals or those in Québec, it also sometimes fails to see connections with other Canadian regions; by looking to this particular cultural production, I make these connections.[104] The Sturdy-Stone Centre murals emerge from and contribute a new chapter to ceramic tile, sculptural ceramic, and architectural ceramic histories within national and international contexts.

Professionalization

Professional crafts in Canada, and by extension ceramics, were in their infancy during the years in which the Sturdy-Stone mural project was developed.[105] In 2005 two substantial histories appeared that document the processes of Canadian craft and ceramic professionalism. Building upon art historian Sandra Flood's recent history of Canadian craft and museum practices in the first half of the twentieth century, Alfoldy traces the developments by which crafts became professionalized in Canada after WWII.[106] She outlines the rise and fall of national

for the Thirty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the American ceramic Society," *Journal of the American Ceramic Society* 15, (April 1932): 81.

[103] It should be recognized here that in Québec studio ceramicists Claude Vermette and Maurice Savoie worked closely with the brick and ceramic industries and architects to respond to the interest in cladding and brickwork within modest modernist buildings. Susan Surette, "Moxy, Monumentality, and ceramic Murals," unpublished paper delivered at the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, 23 April 2014.

[104] For a recent discussion regarding "the 'entangled' nature of the histories of Quebec and Canada" see Magda Fahrni, "Reflections on the Place of Quebec in Historical Writing on Canada," in *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History,* ed. Christopher Dummitt and Michael Dawson, (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London, 2009), 1-20. In fact, during the integration of ceramic relief murals into Québec and Saskatchewan public spaces, c1955-1975, and c1975-1985 respectively, these two provinces shared social, political and economic interests although expressed differently in each province, as both were extricating themselves from their reliance upon rural and agrarian economies and establishing themselves as dynamic modern members of Canadian federalism. Each was in a political, cultural and economic position to support and promote art and craft practice and the integration of the arts into public life.

[105] Sandra Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity: the Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005), 201.

[106] Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice, 1900-1950*, Mercury Series, Paper: Canadian centre for Folk Culture Studies, 74, (Hull QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2001).

organizations and establishment of provincial ones, the refinement of discourse, importance of post-secondary education, changes in exhibition strategies, and improvement in standards, arguing "indicators that Canadian crafts had reached a level of mature professionalism," were in evidence "post-1974."[107] I suggest the Sturdy-Stone mural commissions were only possible because of this professionalism, despite some insecurity about the muralists' abilities to fill them. Ceramic professionalism depended upon a variety of conditions: educational opportunities both in Canada and internationally, supported by funding programs; public awareness of crafts and ceramics through an accepted, albeit limited, discourse attached to larger and more public exhibitions; incipient national collections such as the Massey Collection, and the Bronfman Collection that grew from the national award for fine crafts, the Saidye Bronfman Award; and the establishment of the effective Canadian Crafts Council that supported the organization of provincial craft councils such as the Saskatchewan Crafts Council.[108] Gail Crawford's 2005 history of the development of twentieth-century Canadian ceramics provides a medium specific counterpart to Alfoldy's history, and extends the timeline back to cover Flood's study. She notes the first national organization, the Canadian Guild of Potters was founded in 1936, followed by several civic and provincial guilds, but published information was scant until the mid-1960s with the arrival of three magazines in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. By the mid-1970s The Canadian Guild of Potters, the only national ceramic institution, had lost the confidence of several provincial guilds and was replaced by a new short-lived organization, Ceramics Canada. While craft societies were becoming better organized, ceramic organizations faced more challenges. However, during this critical time of institutional restructuring, Canadian ceramics were noticed internationally. Recognizing Canada's professionalism in ceramics, the International Academy of Ceramics held its proceedings in Alberta rather than Europe in 1973; twelve years later the Ceramic Arts Foundation conference was hosted in Toronto.[109] Another account of professional ceramics also appeared in 2005, a catalogue edited by Timothy Long of

[107] Alfoldy, 2005, 201.
[108] Ibid. While the importance of commercial craft exhibitions are often ignored, the high profile of the only national juried commercial craft exhibition, The One of a Kind Show, established in 1974, was very instrumental in educating the public about craft in general and ceramics in particular. The Saidye Bronfman Award, instituted in 1977 by the Bronfman family in honour of Saidye Bronfman's eightieth birthday, was and is Canada's highest award for craft practice, given annually to an exceptional craftsperson. It is now integrated into the Governor General Awards for the Visual and Media Arts and administered by the Canada Council. Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Museum of Civilization, The Bronfman Collection Virtual Gallery "Saiyde Bronfman Award," accessed 12 May 2103, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/arts/bronfman/brawa01e.shtml.
[109] Crawford, 2005, 180-82.

the Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina to accompany an exhibition celebrating the Regina clay movement of southern Saskatchewan. Essays by Alfoldy, Long, Julia Krueger and David Howard provide insights into the professionalization of ceramics in the province from the 1950s into the late 1970s. As muralists Cicansky, Sures and Malach were implicated at various levels in this movement, its impact on the Sturdy-Stone project will be elaborated in the following chapters. Albeit using a different approach I build upon these recent histories, recognizing the Sturdy-Stone murals developed within a community of professional ceramicists who had connections beyond the province, and who participated in the establishment of ceramic professionalism both before and after their experiences in this mural project.

Terminology

My use of certain terms in this study will be addressed, as many of them are nebulous and/or contentious.[110] Certainly the terminology associated with these ceramic murals, not easily integrated into several discourses as I have argued, is highly political as it reflects and contributes to struggles for cultural consecration attached to financial rewards.[111] However, rather than become bogged down in such an approach, I suggest their cultural consecration can be better argued by looking at what these objects do, how they are the result of a variety of connections coming together to make them, and by what means these configurations in turn allow them to be social. Terminology disputes threaten to make the conversation stale rather than open new discursive venues; as such I have chosen to employ a broader word use rather than a restricted one in order enlarge the possibilities of the sociability of these murals and their materials. In no manner do I use these terms to imply a hierarchy. What I do address is the implications of their having been assigned these categories in past literature and the resultant impact on how they function. Art and craft are two highly contested terms within current discourse. I use art *and* craft to speak of these murals because the murals fulfil general parameters of each category, as public art and as craft material and practices, and have been already assigned to both by several writers. Likewise they are also decorative art and applied art because they decorate the building and are applied to its surface. Some of the murals have been

[110] See Putt, 1990; Frank, 2000; Landry, 2010.
[111] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

spoken about in regards to abstract art or folk art. Again the significance of these terms lies in how these categories and the murals inflect one another. Crucially all these expressions infer the murals are cultural agents, objects with meaning that instigate, alter, or impede social formations. Likewise, the muralists are designated as craftspeople and artists, as well as makers and muralists, affording vocabulary variation without implying hierarchies. Because the mounted murals are primarily accessed by sight I include them within visual culture; because their ceramicness suggests a specific raw material engaged in processes of transformation, and their sculptural dimensions imply the importance of touch, I also consider them part of material culture. As material culture they also take part in commodity exchange. Regarding the murals themselves I employ the term material culture in a broader sense than common portable objects with which it is often associated; however, when discussing some elements within the murals I do use it in its more traditional sense. Although strictly speaking all the objects are made of clay transformed into ceramics, this is a cumbersome way of addressing their materiality. Hence I use clay and ceramics as synonyms when describing the murals, except when I discuss the raw material before firing as clay. As well as relief sculptures, I consider these murals all sculptures or sculptural as they have three dimensions, although some more than others. I do use the term sculptural more in regard to the high relief murals such as Cicansky's *Old Working Class* or Malach's lobby and eighth floor murals. Billyard's *Prairie Themes,* even if sculptural, emerges from the history of decorative or applied arts at the turn of the twentieth-century, and falls easily into that designation as well. While both Cicansky and Malach use an abstract vocabulary, Malach's lobby mural falls more into modernist abstraction and Cicansky's into folk art. The implications of these categorical associations based on the styles of each mural and as an eclectic group form part of the following study.

The Chapters

This dissertation is divided into two sections, one comprised of three chapters and the other of six. In the first section, "A Social and Material Complex," I am concerned with an overview of the development of the project as a group formation comprising the building and the murals, and methodologically turn to a combination of sociology and material culture. The second section, "The Lives of the Murals," involving six chapters, looks at each mural in terms of its commissioning, making, mounting, and reception. In the case when the mural maker was

involved in two projects the murals are discussed in separate sections of the same chapter. This is a logistical decision driven by my reliance on artist and mural biographical elements including common fabrication techniques. The conclusion brings the project together again and suggests future research opportunities. While each member of this eclectic grouping of ceramic murals was made as an independent work of art, in fact their sense of collectivity arises from the common theme they speak to in a common material within one building.

Chapter One, "Giving Life to the Vitality of the Arts," addresses Saskatchewan political and cultural institutions and ideologies that contributed to the realization of this particular project at this explicit time. My choices of these specific contributors emerged from my encounters with the murals and subsequent research. Here I trace shifting political and cultural group formations tied to the emergence of new ideological and material configurations that gave rise to the building and its murals. Latour's ANT is helpful here to trace the variety of mediators involved in these group formations, and in turn assess their roles as mediators in the formation of the mural project. Subsections look closely at political and cultural agency: under the former I include the NDP socialist ideology of the Blakeney government and the importance of the emerging Canadian discourse of multiculturalism; while under the latter I look at Saskatchewan expressions of modernist abstract painting, sculpture, and folk art, emerging ceramic professionalism supported by educational institutions, and two key provincial institutions, the long-established Saskatchewan Arts Board (SAB) and the nascent Saskatchewan Crafts Council (SCC). For each I identify key elements that intersect with the mural program.

While the first chapter was an overview, the second, "Architecture and Decoration: Designing Materials," uses archival documentation, journals, and interviews to trace the emergence of the building/murals complex from its inception until its completion, identifying the mechanisms of co-constitution involving the building/mural collective, the Blakeney government, the SAB and the SCC. The main section of the chapter is divided into five key divisions: the commissioning of the building including concerns attached to its location and design, the impact of its architectural environment within the city centre, the significance of the "percent" program for architectural decoration, negotiations and bureaucratic structures impacting upon the actual mural commissioning process, and finally the public reception of the completed Sturdy-Stone Centre. As this was the first time such a building project, a joint government/commercial complex with multiple examples of public art permanently affixed to its

exterior and interior walls, had been realized in Saskatchewan, everyone involved was exploring new territory. This chapter documents the concerns, challenges, and solutions faced in its realization. Finally I argue the modern building and its craft-based murals form a dialogical relationship that itself forged new identities for the building, the murals, the government, and professional ceramics.

In the last chapter of this section, "Material Matters: Clay and Concrete," I further my argument that non-human as well as human actors must be considered when looking to group formation and considering agency. In this particular chapter the principle assembly I propose is that formed by the concrete building, its cladding material and its decorative murals. I adopt a material culture approach and examine what I call the culture of materials, concrete and clay, to address the significance of the physical union of the concrete building and the ceramic murals, developing the concept of dialogical relationships first proposed in the preceding chapter. Informing this chapter is the scholarship of craft historian Alfoldy and anthropologist Ingold, who both recognize the importance of materials that bring together their physical nature as well as the processes in which they are implicated. In particular I look to Alfoldy's suggestions that material cannot be essentialized, and more particularly the observation that the malleability of both concrete and clay bring them together conceptually.[112] Ingold, like Latour, contends we must take into consideration a variety of agents to understand objects and people and their intersections, and among them are the types and characteristics of materials and how they act and interact. By examining the raw materials involved, clay and concrete, their histories, processes of transformation, and how they were embedded within the geological, economic, political, and cultural histories of Saskatchewan history and culture I argue they are key actors in the political, economic, artistic, and cultural agency of the Sturdy-Stone Centre. Consideration for the juxtapositions of the cultures of clay and concrete allows me to trace their effect on the formation of informal professional associations and professional reputations arising from this project; it also permits me to reflect on how they represent the city and the province.

The second part of this dissertation looks closely at each of the eight mural projects.[113] I approach the layout of this section experientially, as a visitor to the building who first encounters

[112] Alfoldy, 2012, 32.
[113] In the case where the same maker contributed two mural projects, their murals are included in the same chapter. Lorraine Malach and Victor Cicansky both contributed two murals.

the two exterior murals, enters the building through the main west entrance where she is met with the lobby mural and then moves to the elevators that will transport her to the upper office floors. Above each set of five elevators on the ground floor and on four subsequent office floors are mural projects, described and discussed in turn. This approach assumes a phenomenological encounter that takes into consideration the building's layout, its surfaces, lighting, the trajectory of the visitor, and the relationship of each mural to the others as individuals and the project as a whole. In each case I scrutinize the processes of commissioning, designing and making, relating skill to the culture of clay and to the final appearance of the work and its reception. In this section I look to Olsen's argument that an object emerges through an interactive process involving material and practices, rather than unmediated human intention. I also turn to postphenomenology to trace the ways these murals modify the makers' and viewers' interactions with their worlds as well as how these humans impact the murals. I am particularly concerned with documented audience reception of the murals in conjunction with artist statements and examine these in detail in terms of the mural project's theme. This combination of approaches allows me to propose how the murals, their audience, makers, and the provincial government are co-constituted within the parameters of this project. In this section I suggest the eight murals promote dialogical relationships between the local and the global, vernacular and modern, folk and fine, rural and urban.

Chapters four and five address the making, mounting and reception of the two exterior murals on the east and west façades of the building, "The Caveman's Bible" executed by Randy Woolsey and Gregory Hardy, and "The Symbolic Wheel" by Jack Sures, respectively. These two relief murals, one polychromatic and one monochromatic, reference modern abstract painting vocabulary prevalent in Saskatchewan and in other parts of North America at the time. Seen from afar against the light Tyndall stone cladding they appear as immense paintings mounted on a white gallery wall, and, looking out onto two main streets of downtown Saskatoon are the most monumental and public of the murals of the Sturdy-Stone Centre project. In each case I examine how their monumentality and exterior locations impacted their design, choice of raw materials, and equipment, space, and manpower requirements for their realization; I explore how their final appearance and their coming-into-being was informed by and ultimately defined the professionalism of their makers and the image of the province to its inhabitants.

The sixth chapter, "Evoking a Response: *Untitled*, 1977 and *Untitled*, 1982, Lorraine Malach" brings us into the building. Here I look first at the organic, abstract, high relief lobby mural executed during the first phase of the project, followed by the two abstract figurative murals above the elevators on the eighth floor, the last project to be installed in 1983. Malach was the only woman who participated in the Sturdy-Stone Centre mural project during a key moment in the second wave feminist movement. As such, I discuss these two untitled works within a feminist framework paying particular attention to their place within a variety of women's productions: post-1945 allied arts, twentieth-century Canadian relief sculpture, mid-twentieth century monumental ceramics, and Canadian women's art exhibitions. The theoretical concerns of this chapter include how these murals and Malach co-constituted one other, and how feminist art history helps us to understand the ways these murals modify our world and contribute to feminist scholarship.

Chapter seven leads the visitor further into the building where she encounters the first mural project above the elevators. Others are found on levels two, eight, nine and ten, floors on which offices are located. While the preceding chapter addressed feminist issues, this two-part chapter looks at how ethnicity and class and the murals were co-constitutive within current emergent discourses - socialism and multiculturalism. Victor Cicansky designed *The Old Working Class,* five high relief terra cotta figurative murals celebrating Saskatchewan settlers, for the main floor elevators, and a few years later the *New Working Class,* five brightly glazed tondos of Saskatchewan urban workers, for the ninth floor elevators. These two mural projects speak specifically to each other through their titles and share a representational style identified in terms of Cicansky's larger body of work as folk art. I closely attend to the implications of "folk" and its intersections with adjectives applied to the murals such as "grotesque" and "caricature," in regards to cultural and social politics, particularly those involved in the establishment of multiculturalism as a Canadian and Saskatchewan ideal during the 1970s.

In the following eighth chapter, "An Official Presence: *Prairie Themes*, Robert Billyard," I turn to the five murals above the elevators on the second floor lobby. Little has been written about these murals or their maker, and so, rather than looking to other sources to determine audience affect, I closely examine my responses to their physical presence in their particular location and political/social/cultural space. I approach their form, style and material as mediators or agents that instigate my responses and associations, recognizing these in turn become agents

in positioning the murals within ceramic, architectural, and decorative art histories. On one level I argue at first glance these murals can be understood as representing provincial political power because of their shield-like shape; on another level, I suggest they critique this very power through their form, composition, and subject matter.

Chapter nine turns to the two murals associated with the tenth floor elevators, designed and executed by Randy Woolsey. In "A Rural Simplicity: *Untitled,* Randy Woolsey" I claim notions of Saskatchewan folk art and Japanese *Mingei,* or folk craft, are brought together in this project, evident through their iconography and through the techniques and tools used in their making. Here I ask how Woolsey's professional history as a potter in Japan and the practices he subsequently translated into his Saskatchewan practice were integrated into the murals and how these inflected their reception. In light of this, I question how these works inform the larger mural project and how it in turn affects the way the murals can act. I turn to post-colonialist discourse to address these cross-cultural connections and issues arising from Orientalist notions associated with *Mingei* aesthetics and practice and their significance in terms of these murals.

The conclusion once again brings the murals together as part of the whole building/mural complex, examining how this complex works as critical spatial practice. Here I return to reassess the three key questions that guided this research, summarize my answers to them, and look to where this project might lead in the future. By enmeshing the biographies of the murals with those of their makers, the multiple agencies that contribute to their co-constitutions and to the formations of a government's ideology that had commissioned them can be unravelled. As a collective within their building and as individuals, these murals act as agents in the formation of multiple physical, professional, and ideological group formations, all which finally impact on how we understand the implications of this mural project.

Figure 1: Mural by Jack Sures, 1979, Sturdy-Stone Centre west façade

Figure 2: Mural by Randy Woolsey and Gregory Hardy, 1979
Sturdy-Stone Centre, east façade

Figure 3: *Untitled*, Lorraine Malach 1979, Lobby Mural

Figure 4: Sturdy-Stone Centre lobby interior looking from the west entrance doors towards east entrance. Visible murals include: *Untitled,* 1979; Victor Cicansky's *Old Working Class*, 1979; and on the second floor Robert Billyard's *Prairie Themes,* 1979

Figure 5: *Old Working Class,* Victor Cicansky, 1979 Murals above first floor elevators

Figure 6: *Old Working Class,* Victor Cicansky, 1979 Murals above first floor elevators

Figure 7: *Prairie Themes*, Robert Billyard, Murals above second floor elevators

Figure 8: *Prairie Themes*, Robert Billyard, Murals above second floor elevators

Figure 9: *Untitled*, Lorraine Malach 1983, Murals above the eighth floor elevators

Figure 10: *Untitled*, Lorraine Malach 1983, Murals above the eighth floor elevators

Figure 11: *New Working Class,* Victor Cicansky, 1981,
Murals above ninth floor elevators

Figure 12: *New Working Class,* Victor Cicansky, 1981,
Murals above ninth floor elevators

Figure 13: *Untitled*, Randy Woolsey 1982, Mural above tenth floor elevators

Figure 14: *Untitled*, Randy Woolsey 1982, Mural between tenth floor elevators

PART ONE: A SOCIAL AND MATERIAL COMPLEX

CHAPTER ONE

GIVING LIFE TO THE VITALITY OF THE ARTS

Introduction

The Sturdy-Stone Centre, 122-3rd Avenue North, Saskatoon, completed in 1979, was designed in the modern post-WWII Brutalism style by the architectural firm of Forrester, Scott, Bowers, Cooper and Walls for the Saskatchewan provincial government, to provide space for both government offices and retail outlets. The building was commissioned by Premier Allan Blakeney's New Democratic Party (NDP) provincial government (1971-1982), and named to honour Saskatoon's first two provincial legislature members elected from the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party in 1944: John Sturdy and Arthur Stone. In this first CCF government under T.C. Douglas, Sturdy, a teacher, was cabinet minister responsible for "Reconstruction, Labour and Public Welfare,"[1] and Stone was a CNR machinist and back bencher.[2] This was the first socialist government in North America. In the early 1960s, the CCF was rebranded as the NDP after it organizationally and ideologically fused with organized labour.[3] When Premier Allan Blakeney named the new Provincial Government Building in Saskatoon after Sturdy and Stone he paid tribute to the history of his government's socialist ideals. The Sturdy-Stone Centre, built by this NDP government of Saskatchewan during the prosperous 1970s, is the Saskatoon face of the provincial government located two hundred and fifty kilometres south in Regina.

In this chapter I suggest the Sturdy-Stone Centre and its ceramic murals, viewed as a unit, grew from a particular prosperous moment in the 1970s when provincial culture was impacted by the realization of political, economic, and social ideals. However, they recall as well the history

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[1] "Swearing-In of the Eighth Ministry, July 10. 1944," Saskatchewan's 1944 CCF Election: Tommy Douglas and the Election of 1944, http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/election/en/video/quicktime.html, accessed 5 Feb. 2012. John Sturdy, a WWI veteran, school teacher, principal, and in the 1930s, secretary of the newly-formed Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation, recognized the need for a government guaranteed minimum wage. John H. Archer, *Saskatchewan A History*, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 237-38.

[2] "Sturdy-Stone Centre," Doors Open Saskatoon 2007 Participating Buildings, www.doorsopen saskatoon.ca/welcome/buildings/sturdystone.html, accessed, 18 August 2008.

[3] While the federal CCF party joined with organized labour in 1961, the Saskatchewan provincial CCF party did not become the NDP until 1964. Archer, 306.

of this moment, and project these memories into the future. As art historian Annie Gérin notes "memory in the guise of public art always looks forward."[4] Furthermore looking at the architecture and the murals together importantly challenges the limits of what Gérin describes as two views of public art: one that sees it "in abstraction from the temporality and environment from which [it] evolve[s]"; and the other that understands it as "always and necessarily polemical and political" so that "the quality or success of the artwork is mainly measured through the lens of its effect on civil society."[5] Of particular importance here in deciding what aspects of Saskatchewan history to address in terms of the social lives of these murals is architectural historian Jane Rendell's discussion of "critical spatial practice" where space is connected to social relations, place is understood as a unique space, and location describes where the work is physically encountered.[6] This chapter is an overview of some of the political ideologies, cultural concerns, and organizational connections involved in the emergence of these murals

The Murals

The Sturdy-Stone Centre purportedly features the best single collection of ceramic art in Saskatchewan, and is the only modernist building in Canada to have such an extensive, exclusive, and eclectic ceramic decorative program.[7] This program comprises two monumental exterior trapezoidal relief murals, whose shape refers to the map of the province itself. These murals ornament the east and west façades of the building: the east-facing mural by ceramicist Randy Woolsey and painter Greg Hardy is composed of low relief colourful glazed abstract organic forms on a textured ground that changes in lighting conditions from shades of blue to shades of brown; and the west-facing mural by Jack Sures consists of undulating unglazed stoneware tiles in tones of terra cotta arranged in a circular design. The mural program extends into the interior, where six relief murals executed by four different artists are located. Because the third to the sixth floors inclusive serve to access the aboveground parkade, the murals are found only on the floors dedicated to offices. Lorraine Malach's landscape abstraction is located on a concrete supporting wall in the first floor lobby. The other five mural projects are installed

[4] Annie Gérin, "Introduction: Off Base," in *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives,* ed. Annie Gérin and James S. McLean, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 12.
[5] Ibid, 5, 6.
[6] Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between,* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 20.
[7] "Sturdy-Stone Centre," Doors Open 2007.

above the five elevators, also on interior concrete structural walls. Above each of the first floor and ninth floor elevators are five figurative murals by Victor Cicansky, the unglazed *The Old Working Class*, and the brightly glazed *The New Working Class* respectively. Robert Billyard's heraldic murals based on flora and fauna and glazed in earthy colours are located on the second floor. Lorraine Malach created figurative panels in shades of yellow, ochre and browns for the eighth floor that extend the width of the walls where the elevators are positioned; and located on the tenth floor are Randy Woolsey's unglazed terra cotta Prairie landscapes, one stretching the length of the longer wall and the other, a large disk, in the middle of the shorter one. The eclectic nature of these interior murals with their idiosyncratic approaches to the space they inhabit disrupts the dominant modernist discourse instituted by the exterior murals in conjunction with the building's Brutalist style.

The lighting of the spaces where these interior murals are located has changed over the years. In one instance, modifications to the building's interior to create more office space on the second floor has resulted in loss of the original natural lighting for Malach's lobby mural and Billyard's second floor murals. In another instance the original deeply recessed lighting wells in the hallways over the elevator lobbies were replaced in or about 2009 with fluorescent panels and spot lighting directed onto the murals. This increased illumination from the spots focuses attention on the elevator murals.

These murals represent two different commissioning and installation stages: the first stage, comprising the exterior murals and those found on the first and second floors was completed in 1979 for the formal opening of the building; the second stage involving the remaining murals on the eighth to the tenth floors inclusively was finalized in 1983. A favourable review for the first stage of this decorative project appeared in *Arts West* in 1979, where it was evaluated as "an arresting monument to the vitality of the arts."[8] However, by 2001 it was evident this vital public project had lost its importance within the Saskatchewan art world. That year ceramic artist Lorraine Malach, who had created two massive works for the Sturdy-Stone Centre during both commissioning stages, indignantly reported to a friend that a researcher for the MacKenzie Art Gallery, who was preparing information for an upcoming exhibition on

[8] Ruth Wright Miller, "Saskatoon," *Arts West* 4, no.6 (Sept/Oct.1979): 10.

the Regina ceramic movement of the 1970s, "had never heard of the ceramic murals done in Saskatoon."[9]

In this chapter's two succeeding sections, one that is specifically concerned with provincial political concerns and ideals, and one that looks at key provincial art institutions and movements, I draw upon the sociology of associations to examine group formations that led to this "arresting monument to the vitality of the arts," and its subsequent erasure from public memory. While the murals cannot and should not be reduced to only "polemical and political " objects, their location within an architecturally striking, and even controversial provincial government building, undertaken as a major construction project that stretched over two consecutive NDP mandates, warrants the consideration of their commissioning, making, and early reception within this framework. The explicit inclusion of contemporary Saskatchewan art made by living Saskatchewan ceramic artists involves specific provincial art and craft communities with their attendant institutions and aims, that fostered visual vocabularies and professional competencies and lay the groundwork for public reception. These links to the murals have been traced by "follow[ing] the actors themselves," an approach suggested by Latour as essential to writing any Actor-Network-Theory account, and in this sense actors are to be understood as not only human, but also comprising non-human players such as texts, objects, materials, institutions, and events.[10] While these associations with specific murals and their makers will be elaborated upon in subsequent chapters, this preliminary foray into the network of associations lays the groundwork for further discussion of the building and its murals.

Political Background

Saskatchewan New Democratic Party

The murals were included in a public space on a public provincial building built during the height of popularity of the social democratic NDP government of Allan Blakeney; thus the political climate that fostered them must be briefly examined. Political scientist, David E. Smith, suggests that "[e]xcluding Quebec, Saskatchewan's politics are predictably singled out among provincial politics for comment," primarily because of the social democratic movement in the

[9] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, 13 July 2001, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[10] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 12.

province and the election of forty years of governments that supported that ideal over a period of sixty years.[11] Indeed, it has been proposed that the fore-runner of the NDP, the CCF party, reached mythological status in Saskatchewan where it originated, and the election in 1944 of this North American socialist party was, in fact, "a defining moment in Canadian history."[12] The federal CCF party had been formed in 1932-3 through the decision to work together by "farmers, labour, socialists and social reformers".[13] The federal NDP Party represented a 1961 fusion of the CCF with organized labour, although the name change was not adopted by the Saskatchewan provincial CCF party until 1964.[14]A key document that contributed to the development of CCF/NDP policy was the 1933 Regina Manifesto, a socialist stance against the "predatory interests" of "irresponsible financiers and industrialists" in light of the miseries of the Great Depression and the "Dirty Thirties."[15] In 1944 the support of the people in Saskatchewan for the CCF was based upon a fifty-year experience with the cooperative movement in the province, an openness to government implication in the economy to regulate the boom and bust cycles that dominated the agricultural markets and the long held resentment in the West against a politically and economically dominant central Canada, underscored by the geographical location of the country's institutions.[16] Under Tommy (T.C.) Douglas, founder of the CCF and Saskatchewan premier 1944-1961, two key events occurred that directly touch this study: the foundation of the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SAB) and the creation of the crown corporation Saskatchewan Clay Products.[17] While the CCF lost power in 1964, they regained it again as the NDP in 1971, under Allan Blakeney whose more centrist government held power until 1982.[18]

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[11] David E. Smith, "Saskatchewan: A Distinct Political Culture," in *Perspectives of Saskatchewan,* ed. Jene M. Porter, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 37-38.
[12] Michael Thome, "Introduction," *Saskatchewan's 1944 CCF Election*, Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists, http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/election/en/intro.htm, accessed 5 Feb. 2012.
[13] Archer, 224.
[14] Ibid, 306.
[15] "The Regina Manifesto Adopted at the First National Convention Held at Regina, Saskatchewan, July 1933, " in Leo Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed; A Study of Change in the CCF*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 160-173.
For more on the economic and social effects of the Great Depression (1929-39) in Saskatchewan/Canada, see Archer; Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, *Saskatoon: The First Half-Century,* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1982); Curtis R. McManus, *Happyland: a history of the "dirty thirties" in Saskatchewan, 1914-1937,* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011); W.A. Waiser, *All hell can't stop us: the On-to-Ottawa Trek and Regina Riot.* Calgary: Fifth House, 2003.
[16] "Saskatchewan's 1944 CCF Election," http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/election/en/index.htm, accessed 5 Feb. 2012.
[17] David M. Quiring, "Crown Corporations and Publicly Owned Enterprises," *Saskatchewan Encyclopedia*,http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/crown_corporations_and_publicly_owned_enterprises.html, accessed 13 Feb. 2012.
[18] Archer, 338.

Blakeney, like Douglas, embarked upon significant economic and social policy "innovations" within a ten-year period, some more successful than others as Blakeney himself admitted, but nonetheless considered by many to be revolutionary.[19] The triumph of the NDP under Blakeney coincided with the first time in Saskatchewan history that the urban population outnumbered the rural, at fifty-three to forty-seven per cent respectively.[20] His election platform was articulated in the *New Deal for the People,* a publication distributed to every household in Saskatchewan before the 1971 election, outlining seventeen major points including "government intervention in the provincial economy and various social programs designed to assist members of lower classes."[21] The economy was transformed through a series of major initiatives, welcomed by many. Crown corporations were established with their headquarters in Saskatchewan, including the uranium, energy, and potash industries; agricultural reforms involved stabilization of incomes for farmers; and the expansion of the co-operative oil refinery was undertaken. On a social justice level, environmental consultation programs with appropriate supporting funding infrastructure were instituted, and legislation was introduced to improve working conditions, including equal pay for equal work, improved wages and holidays, and parental leave and daycare facilities. Health care was extended through extensive dental, drug and homecare programs. It was the first province to initiate legal aid and, after Ontario, the second to introduce a human rights commission. An analysis of the Blakeney government ranks it as the first or second in Canada to implement one hundred and twenty-six "innovative" programs.[22] This was a dynamic and determined government with a clear vision that required a central location for the implementation of its programs in Saskatoon.

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[19] For a detailed study of these innovations from the experience and reflections of the policy makers see: Eleanor D. Glor, ed., *Policy Innovation in the Saskatchewan Public Sector, 1971-82*, (North York, Ontario: Captus Press, 1997). In this book, Premier Blakeney evaluates the innovations. Allan Blakeney, "Reflections on Innovations I Hoped to See," in Glor, 253-70.

[20] "Appendix F. Rural/Urban Population Trends in Saskatchewan," in Archer, 360-361.

[21] Jocelyn Praud and Sarah McQuarrie, "The Saskatchewan CCF-NDP from the Regina Manifesto to the Romanow Years," in *Saskatchewan Politics Into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Howard A. Leeson, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2001), 151.

[22] "Table 1: Innovations and Early Adoptions Introduced by the Government of Saskatchewan, 1971-982," in *Policy Innovation in the Saskatchewan Public Sector, 1971-82*, ed. Eleanor D. Glor, (North York Ontario, Captus Press, 1997), 10-19; "History," Co-Op Refinery Complex, http://www.ccrl-fcl.ca/history.html, accessed 11 Feb. 2011.

Figure 15: Sturdy-Stone Centre, 122St. and 3rd Ave. Saskatoon Saskatchewan, 1984

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan's most populous city with almost a quarter million people was a beneficiary of many of these programs. In the 1970s, with the growth of the importance of mining in northern Saskatchewan and the potash industry of central Saskatchewan, the provincial government was determined to locate crown corporate headquarters in Saskatchewan. Premier Blakeney explained, "very little of the head office activity associated with these industries took place in Saskatchewan," and the government wanted to ensure that goods and services for these booming industries would be located locally.[23] Saskatoon is the corporate headquarters of two of these iconic Saskatchewan companies, Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, 1974 [24] (now privatized as Potashcorp) and the Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation, 1974 (now privatized as Cameco, a uranium company, which resulted from its 1988 fusion with Eldorado Nuclear).[25] This move for nationalization was also motivated by rising prices on the world markets for the natural resources Saskatchewan possessed, coupled with the threat from the federal government to heavily tax the profits, thereby depriving Saskatchewan of the proceeds.[26] Research in the mining and forestry industries, as well as law, physics, and medicine was also

[23] Blakeney, 259.
[24] Tom Waller, "Framework for Economic Development: Crown Corporations and the Crown Investments Corporation," in Glor, 34.
[25] Crystal Wallin, "Uranium," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/uranium.html, accessed 13 Feb. 2011; "About Cameco History," Cameco, http://www.cameco.com/about/history/, accessed 13 Feb. 2011.
[26] Blakeney, 259.

centred at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, the province's major university. In the early years of the Blakeney administration, with the increased administrative visibility of the provincial government in Saskatoon due to the establishment of the crown corporations, and the provincial expansion in Social Services and Health, there was a need for an accompanying increased physical visibility and, in a very practical sense, office space. The disparate locations of the provincial government services dispersed throughout the city had become inefficient and the increased economic activity and government involvement required spatial streamlining.[27] The building of a Provincial Office Building, which was subsequently named in 1979 the Sturdy-Stone Centre, was to fulfill this task.

The arrival in power of the Saskatchewan NDP also coincided with what one author identified as a growing "crisis of confidence in Confederation"[28] experienced by the western provinces and related to several factors. These particularly included the national debate around bilingualism and biculturalism precipitated by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the designation criteria of have and have-not provinces that favoured transfer payments from the Prairie Provinces to Québec and the Maritimes,[29] as well as the tension around oil prices due to the energy crisis of the 1970s. In 1970 David P. Gagnon of the University of Calgary warned "it would be …erroneous to discount the pervasiveness and persistence of 'alienation' and 'dissatisfaction' on the Prairies, if only because the roots of dissent are so firmly implanted in the Prairie provinces' historical experience in Confederation, [and] in the conditions of life dictated by the plains environment…" He also remarked at that time that Prairie regional identity "seems to be aggressively reasserting its presence." [30] Author and journalist, Robert Mason Lee, drew upon his personal experiences growing up in the west to point out the development of a western colonial response that he suggests is similar to that of Québec in the 1960s and 1970s.[31] This Prairie dissatisfaction and identity assertion was only compounded during the tenure of the Federal Liberals under Pierre Trudeau in Ottawa. A

[27] "Report Proposed Provincial Office Building Saskatoon, Planning Department January 29, 1975, R 1613 3.1, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[28] David P. Gagan, "Introduction," in *Prairie Perspectives: Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference,* ed. David P. Gagan, (Toronto, Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd., 1969), 1.
[29] Ibid, 2.
[30] Ibid, 3.
[31] Robert Mason Lee, "The Smart and Determined S.O.B.: Trudeau and the West," in *Trudeau's Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau,* eds. Andrew Cohen and J.L. Granatstein, (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1998), 119.

particularly contentious issue was the adoption of the Official Languages Act in 1969 that entrenched bilingualism rather than the Prairie approach, although much contested as a myth by some, of multilingualism and multiculturalism.[32]

Multiculturalism

In a recent book, *Perspectives of Saskatchewan,* the author claims Saskatchewan as the "birthplace, in fact if not in name, of multiculturalism."[33] This pervasive belief that Saskatchewan's ethnic pluralism has made the province and its history distinct from that of the rest of Canada is mirrored in Saskatchewan's 1986 motto "from many peoples, strength," and as such is included in numerous Saskatchewan publications.[34] In fact, Saskatchewan was the first province to legislate multiculturalism under the Blakeney NDP government, adopting the Multiculturalism Act in 1974, following the federal government's lead under Trudeau in 1971.[35] The six Sturdy-Stone Centre muralists came from a variety of backgrounds including Anglo-Saxon, Jewish, Romanian, and Polish, most second or third generation Canadians. Layered upon their cultures of origin, were their formal education and travel experiences in Canada, as well as to the United States, Europe and Japan, all of which they drew upon when creating their murals. In some ways, they were an ideal group to promote the province's multicultural ideal expressed through visual art diversity.

Concerns about multiculturalism in the 1960s became entrenched in discussions within the Federal Government's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-70), culminating in the commission's Book IV (1969), which specifically addressed concerns about multiculturalism and its role within a bilingual and bicultural nation. This issue was considered increasingly relevant due to the "the government's need to balance competing forces and tensions in the overriding interest of national unity."[36] With the proclamation of the Multiculturalism Policy of Canada in 1971, Trudeau announced: "The government will support

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[32] J.E. Rea, "The Roots of Prairie Society," in Gagan, 1969, 46-55.
[33] David E. Smith, xii.
[34] Waiser, 2009, 57.
[35] David McGrane, "From Liberal Multiculturalism to Civic Republicanism: An Historical Perspective on Multiculturalism Policy in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 43, no. 1-2 (2011): 91. See also Mark Lehman, "Canadian Multiculturalism," 93-6E, Government of Canada, Political and Social Affaires Division, 1999, http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/CIR/936-e.htm, accessed 10 June 2013.
[36] Eve Haque, *Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada,* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 187.

and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give form to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expressions and values with other Canadians and so give a richer life for us all."[37] Multiculturalism in the context of this discussion is understood to refer "to an ideal of equality and mutual respect among a population's ethnic or cultural groups," as well as the 1971 federal government policy.[38] This interest in multiculturalism and the perceived threats to national unity by linguistically and culturally disparate groups was spurred by a variety of elements: First Nation land disputes; Québécois nationalism; changes to the point system in immigration policy from one of preferred countries of origin; increased immigration following the Second World War; and the assumption of educational, economic and social power by previous waves of immigrants.[39] Trudeau's 1971 approach legitimizing the preservation of "homeland culture," identified as "liberal multiculturalism," was seen as the antithesis of the Anglo-conformity approach that had dominated Canadian policy throughout the twentieth century. Under liberal multiculturalism "[d]iversity is managed through respecting individuals' right to choose their own cultural expression and through sharing minority cultures with the majority in order to generate acceptance of diversity within the general public." Since the 1990s with the rise of criticism against liberal multiculturalism, and in light of the post September 11, 2001 attacks on New York, another model has been promoted, civic republicanism where "[t]he individual is encouraged to retain his or her homeland culture—but only to the extent that it does not interfere with his or her participation in the broader polity."[40] It remains to be seen, however, whether multiculturalism has really succeeded in defining a new way of being Canadian or, as Eve Haque suggests, has just entrenched the multicultural figure as the "limit figure" making evident what is outside and what is inside.[41]

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[37] Sarah V. Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism and National Identity in Canada," *International Journal on Group Rights,* 5 (1997): 34.
[38] Leo Driedger and Jean Burnet, "Multiculturalism," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/multiculturalism, accessed March 9, 2011.
[39] Haque, 7; McGrane, 90-91.
[40] McGrane, 83-84. Objections to liberal multiculturalism can be summed up as: fear of the consequences of a lack of unified goals and vision, the loss of an ability to work together, the freezing of identities in the past, and a fear that the levelling out of all ethnicities will dilute real problems of racism experienced by visual minorities. Leo Driedger, "Multiculturalism: Sorting Identities, Rights and Conflicts," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 43, no.1-2, (2011): 231-3; Joseph Garcea, Anna Kirova and Lloyd Wong, "Introduction: Multiculturalism Discourses in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 40, no.1 (2008): 4.
[41] Haque, 250.

While multiculturalism as an expression became prominent in the 1970s, in the 1920s and 1930s it had an earlier manifestation as the Canadian mosaic. It was first used by Victoria Hayward in her 1922 travel book, *Romantic Canada* to describe her encounter with the architecture and religious music of various ethnic groups who settled the Prairies: "It is indeed a mosaic of vast dimensions and great breadth, essayed of the Prairie."[42] In 1926 the expression was applied by Kate Foster in *Our Canadian Mosaic* towards the Canadian immigration policy where she championed amalgamation, rather than assimilation.[43] The mosaic metaphor of Canada was particularly popularized by John Murray Gibbon, organizer of folk festivals for the CPR in the late 1920s and early 1930s. He transformed this interest in ethnic cultural expressions into a CBC radio show, followed by a 1938 publication, *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation,* recipient of the non-fiction Governor General's Award.[44] According to Gibbon, these different immigrant cultures, understood as handicrafts, dance, and music, were diffused through folk festivals and the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, outlets that contributed to both integration within the Anglo-conformity model and the mosaic image. The mosaic is a metaphor that in some ways challenged the equally powerful "flood" comparison contemporary with it.

An outspoken critic of the influx of eastern European "mongrels" was Saskatchewan's Anglican bishop, George Exton Lloyd who opposed what he characterized as a "flood" of "dirty, ignorant, garlic-smelling continentals."[45] Non-British immigration was referred to as a "flood" or "vast tide" and the model to manage this "influx" of newcomers was to encourage them to adopt the British-based political, social and civic model that dominated Canadian life.[46] This type of vitriol led to support in Saskatchewan for the Ku Klux Klan, that by 1929 had established a

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[42] Victoria Hayward, *Romantic Canada,* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1922), 187; Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 150. Day quotes Hayward in his discussion of different approaches to Canadian diversity.

[43] Kate Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic,* (Toronto: Dominion Council Y.W.C.A., 1926), 135; Day, 151. Day refers to Foster's push for amalgamation of cultures in his history.

[44] Antonia Smith, "'Cement for the Canadian Mosaic': Performing Canadian Citizenship in the Work of John Murray Gibbon," in "Transnational Migration, Race, and Citizenship," *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 1, no.1, (Autumn, 2007): 39.

[45] C.J. Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop: George Exton Lloyd and the Immigration Debate," MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996, 59-61, quoted in Waiser 2009, 66-67.

[46] The metaphor "flood" and "tide" was used by J.S. Woodsworth in J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates; or Coming Canadians,* (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, c1909), 28, 201, 253. Influx, tide, vast tide, waves, and flow appeared in Canada, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, "Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: Book IV, The cultural contribution of the other ethnic groups," Canada, 1967, 4, 9, 17, 27. The water metaphor consistent over a fifty year period within different political and social contexts is brought to our attention by Day, 18, 21.

considerable base of twenty-five thousand members in one hundred and twenty-five locales, comprising eighteen per cent of the Anglo-Saxon population, which itself comprised fifty per cent of the total population. Support for the Klan was such that it managed to contribute to the defeat of the provincial Liberal government that had at least superficially wooed the immigrant population. Only the severe hardships of the Great Depression thwarted the program of the Klan, when many of the rural immigrants were forced to migrate to the cities, including Regina.[47] By 1944 the Saskatchewan voters of Eastern-European descent had combined with socialists influenced by British labour to catapult the CCF to power, the one party that, in contrast to the Liberals and Conservatives, was willing to include the "ethnic" Europeans in its affairs.[48] The Saskatchewan CCF government of Tommy Douglas recognized this important constituency, moving in 1947 to mitigate the racist implications of the Anglo-conformity approach by passing the Saskatchewan Rights Bill. This legislation prohibited discrimination on racial and religious grounds regarding employment, education, public service, and property.[49] Despite these political inroads the "Anglo-conformity" approach continued to dominate both the federal and provincial approach to immigrant communities until the early 1970s. Some scholars have argued the idea of the mosaic never transcended the expectation that the British-Canadian model was the end point of amalgamation; others suggest that, with the increased blurring of the individual tiles of the mosaic, as identities becoming more complex through "cross- cultural relations and marriages," we may now have to look to other metaphors to reflect the syncretic nature of cultural and national identity.[50]

By the late 1960s in Saskatchewan members of several immigrant groups had acquired enough social, and economic prestige to openly question their lack of access to political power. In the 1971 Saskatchewan election, the votes of "the ethnic" population and the issues of multiculturalism became important as fifty-three per cent of Saskatchewan's population could be defined as having neither British nor French origins, with the majority tracing their roots to eastern Europe. Multiculturalism became an issue that influenced several swing ridings to vote NDP. In the light of this, Premier Blakeney placed three members of the central and eastern

[47] Waiser, 2009, 67-68.
[48] Nelson Wiseman, "Five Immigrant Waves: Their Ideological Orientations and Partisan Reverberations," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 39, no.1-2 (2007): 21.
[49] Waiser, 2009, 69.
[50] Day, 197; Eve Haque, 197; Garcea, Kirova, and Wong, 7.

European ethno cultural communities into high-ranking cabinet posts. One of these new politicians was Roy Romanow who was to become in 1991 the first Ukrainian-Canadian Saskatchewan premier.[51] He recalled, as a novice lawyer in the 1960s, feeling the separateness of the social divide between the eastern and central Europeans in east Regina and the Anglo-Saxon establishment in central and west Regina.[52] The Blakeney government subsequently arranged meetings with the leaders of the province's ethno cultural communities to address their concerns about language and culture loss. Blakeney's next response to electoral support from these communities was the adoption of the Saskatchewan Multicultural Act of 1974, which encouraged both individuals and groups to learn more about their own and others' heritage and to transmit this knowledge about Saskatchewan's "multicultural heritage" within an educational context.[53] It must be noted, however, that Saskatchewan's multiculturalism has been considered racialized, excluding the First Nations.[54] Because of Canadian institutional support for recognition of a variety of heritages, seventy-eight types of Canadians were listed in the 1979 Canadian family tree, more than triple the number in 1960.[55] The realization of the multicultural ideal, including the exclusion of the First Nations, was at the core of the current social history narrative of Saskatchewan and was certainly evident in the ethno cultural origins of the Sturdy-Stone artists.

The effects of Saskatchewan's Multicultural Act of 1974 were seen in the government's approach to the arts. In 1975, the Department of Youth and Culture and the SAB held a three-day conference to "review the role of arts in society and develop guidelines for the future." In their brief they emphasized "the creative expression of one's experience and skill," was articulated in many forms by many cultures who lived in Saskatchewan, beginning with the First Nations and including settlers from a variety of European origins, with works ranging from everyday functional items to those in galleries. As well as addressing familiar concerns about the integration of art into everyday living within communities, the development and maintenance of standards, and the economic issues of the arts, the subject of multiculturalism was raised. Key

[51] Gregory P. Marchildon, "Romanow, Roy, (1939-)," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/romanow_roy_john_1939-.html.
[52] Waiser, 2009, 70.
[53] McGrane, 90-91. The three politicians were Roy Romanow and Ed Tchorzewski (Ukranian-Canadian), and Walter Smishek (Polish-Canadian). Tchorzewski was the minister responsible for multiculturalism.
[54] Lynn Caldwell and Christopher Lord, "An Ambiguous Inheritance: Church in Saskatchewan," in Porter, 337-338.
[55] Day, 190.

questions centred on the changes in customs and styles associated with cultures of origin in light of "the here and now," the interaction of cultures where cultural identity is preserved "within a lifestyle that has common characteristics for all," and the implications of this for those of the dominant culture.[56] Multiculturalism and its expression through a variety of art forms, materials, and vocabularies were understood as key components of the province's culture and significant to the building of a prosperous society. Such a public declaration fostered a tolerance and even acceptance on an institutional level for art forms from a variety of cultural and socio-economic constituencies in Saskatchewan, realized within some sort of "commonality" that would hopefully emerge through the intermeshing of cultures. An implicit assumption was, of course, that the common ground would materialise from the Anglo-Saxon community, representing about forty-two per cent of the province's population in 1971.[57] The Sturdy-Stone mural program is the first example in Saskatchewan's public art program of this approach, evident through its diverse visual vocabularies.

The Craft of Art and the Art of Craft

The highly eclectic nature of the murals on and in the Sturdy-Stone Centre points to the exposure of the ceramicists and the Saskatchewan government to a wide variety of artistic influences, and the positive reception by the public of the first five murals installed in 1979 reveals this was widespread.[58] Several important Saskatchewan institutions, as well as wider artistic movements, operating from the 1950s through to the early 1980s, fostered these different approaches to, and appreciation for, the crafts and fine arts. Among these were art education programs at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and Regina, the SAB, the Saskatchewan Crafts Council (SCC), the Regina Five, the Emma Lake workshops, the revival of interest in folk art, and the Regina Clay Movement. These institutions and movements, as well as the people involved in them, were key to fostering the cultural climate in which the murals were commissioned, designed, created, and received.

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[56] "SaskARTchewan 75: A Study of the Arts in Saskatchewan," attached to "Letter from R.N. Flison to W.C. Phillips July 2 1975," R 1461 File 2.2 SPMC President's Office Saskatchewan Archives Board

[57] Archer, 358-359.

[58] A letter sent to the Saskatchewan Executive Council from Government Services in 1982 mentioned "…the work has been very well received by the public." Letter from D.E. Foley to Florence Wilkie, Artwork, January 22, 1982, R 1053 File 190a, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

Abstract Art

The entrenchment of abstract art vocabularies beginning mainly in the 1950s coincided with a progressively more urban population and increased community college and university enrolment.[59] Particular awareness of modernism and signs of modernity in Saskatchewan during this period were closely tied to the emergence of a regional identity in the face of central Canadian cultural, economic, and poltical dominance. In the 1990s, Eli Bornstein, well-known Saskatchewan artist and University of Saskatchewan fine arts professor, reflected upon the cultural message "perpetuated by the media, including the CBC, the National Film Board, and the Canada Council," and all Canadian cultural institutions situated in central Canada. The consistent communication was that "western art should always be tied to agricultural or farming images." He attributed the persistence of these stereotypes to "the cultural division in Canada between East and West, and the lack of communication, the different standards, and the neglect of the less-populated West by the more heavily populated and culturally dominant East." For Bornstein, "Canada's two solitudes extend beyond the languages and cultures of French and English."[60] As recently as 2009 he wrote: "The Prairies are often characterized, if not dismissed, by eastern Canada as agricultural, rural, and agrarian, and are depicted by the media as something of a cultural wasteland."[61] Bornstein specifically categorized the Sturdy-Stone's east and west façade murals as a more permanent kind of abstract art for public buildings that asserted the province's cosmopolitan urbanity, thereby celebrating regional expression within an international art movement.[62]

During the period concerned in this study, the need to affirm a regional identity was articulated as well in *Arts West,* which was unequivocal in its mandate to promote regional western Canadian art practices. In 1977 and 1978, Ernest G. Wilson opposed the "shallow concerns" of "New York Art" and the "same paucity of vision" seen in much of Canadian art geographically and stylistically proximate to New York [central Canada], to the art produced by

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[59] Between 1951 and 1971 Saskatchewan moved from a rural/urban percentage split of 69.6:30.4 to 47:53. Archer, 360-361; Mark Vajcner, "Hall Commission," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, "http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/hall_commission.html, accessed 13 July 2012; Ken Horsman, "Education in Saskatchewan Timeline," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/education_in_saskatchewan_timeline.html, accessed 13 July 2012.
[60] Eli Bornstein, "Pioneering Abstract Art on the Prairies," in Glen Carruthers and Gordana Lazarevich, *A Celebration of Canada's Arts 1930-1970*, (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1996), 150.
[61] Eli Bornstein, "Abstract Art on the Prairies," in Porter, 273.
[62] Ibid, 276.

"the finest and most distinctive artists in Canada, … the farthest removed from the New York variants."[63] As art historian David Howard suggests, this protest reflected a shift in ideology from an embrace of modernism that had accompanied Clement Greenberg's participation in Saskatchewan's Emma Lake Artists' Workshops, and the subsequent rise in popularity of the Greenberg-championed abstract paintings of the Regina Five, to one that endorsed local community values and expressions.[64] In terms of this, Howard importantly sees a link between the Regina Five and the later development of the Regina Clay movement, but explains this as a reaction to the abstract modernist vocabulary and the formalist limitations on social engagement.[65]

The Emma Lake Professional Workshops, in which Greenberg was involved for a time, were run by the Regina Arts College of the University of Saskatchewan from 1955 to 1973, and fueled the practice of and appreciation for abstract painting in Saskatchewan. The university had already run art workshops at Emma Lake geared to a general public for twenty years, but these particular workshops were initiated by Regina Arts College instructors Kenneth Lochhead and Art McKay.[66] It has been suggested this shift in Saskatchewan painting was in many ways a reaction to the European influenced landscape school that dominated the province until after 1945, particularly exemplified by the picturesque paintings of Augustus Kenderdine.[67] The new generation of post Second World War abstract artists included, among others, the group known as the Regina Five, painters Kenneth Lochhead, Arthur McKay, Douglas Morton, Ted Godwin, and Ronald Bloore. Along with painters Roy Kiyooka, William Perehudoff, and Terry Fenton, sculptor Robert Murray, and structurist Eli Bornstein, they all contributed to the prominence of Saskatchewan on the Canadian modern art map in the mid-1960s.[68] Particularly influential was

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[63] Ernest G. Wilson, "View from the Plain: False Gods and Faded Icons," *Arts West* 3, no.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1978): 39. See also Ernest G. Wilson, "View from the Plain: In Defence of Provincialism; Saving the Artistic Soul from the Pitfalls of Internationalism," *Arts West* 2, no.6 (Nov. Dec. 1977): 42.
[64] David Howard, "Making Space for Clay: Ceramics, Regionalism and Postmodernism in Regina," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making*, ed. Timothy Long, (MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatoon, 2005), 61.
[65] Howard, 2005, 59-65.
[66] "Art, Visual" *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan,* http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/art_visual.html, accessed 17 March 2013; Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists, "Educational Institutions: University of Saskatchewan's Summer School of Art at Emma Lake," An Exhibition: Saskatchewan and the Visual Arts, 2001, http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/art/educational-emma-school.html, accessed 17 March 2013.
[67] Keith Bell, "Claiming Saskatchewan: Landscape Painting From 1905-1950," in Porter*,* 155-271.
[68] Joyce Zemans, "Making Painting Real: Abstract and Non-objective Art in English Canada, c.1915-61," in *The Visual Arts in Canada*, ed. Anne Whitelaw, Brian Foss and Sandra Paikowsky, (Don Mills On.: Oxford University Press), 181-2; Diana Nemiroff, "Geometric Abstraction after 1950," in Whitelaw, Foss, and Paikowsky, 218, 222.

the 1961 exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada of the Regina Five that also included architect Clifford Wiens. This group, most of whom had been hired to teach at Regina College of the University of Saskatchewan and from elsewhere in Canada or the United States, brought a new painting vision to Saskatchewan, one fueled by both their teaching positions at the Regina Arts College and the Emma Lake Workshops they organized and attended. Art historian Joyce Zemans suggests the Emma Lake workshops became a channel for New York's abstract modernism,[69] and these painters significantly influenced their students, laying the basis for the acceptance of this artistic vocabulary in Saskatchewan by the cultural arena. This was also aided by support for their work from the collecting and exhibiting policies of the Mackenzie Art Gallery during the late 1950s into the 1970s.[70] In Saskatoon, Eli Bornstein's innovative abstract reliefs that formed the structurist school were well received throughout Canada as well as internationally.[71] Bornstein explained his works as extensions of landscape painting, because the play of the ambient light and shadow across the surface, coupled with the mobility of the viewer, meant the dynamic was similar to that found in nature.[72] Although *Arts West* critic Wilson had protested against the dominance of the New York School, by the late 1970s Saskatchewan artists had assimilated its lessons and adapted its abstract vocabulary to their own concerns, and were receiving widespread acceptance through regular gallery exposure. Within the Saskatchewan cultural community abstract art was an accepted part of Saskatchewan life when the Sturdy-Stone murals were commissioned. This acceptance was publicly acknowledged in the modernist vocabulary of Woolsey and Hardy's east face and Sures' west face monumental Sturdy-Stone murals.

Folk Art

Abstract art, however, was not the only kind of art appreciated in Saskatchewan. Folk art, an apparent antithesis of the abstract art movement, was initially noticed and appreciated by the

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See also: Roald Nasgaard, *Abstract Painting in Canada,* (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 2007), 288-293; *A World Away: Stories From the Regina Five,* directed by Mark Wihak, (Chat Perdue, 2001), VHS.

[69] Zemans, 181.

[70] Jack Sures quoted in Greg Beatty, "Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making," *Espace Sculpture* 76, (Summer 2006): 41-42

[71] Nemiroff, 2010, 218-219.

[72] Ibid, 218.

art establishment in Saskatchewan in the late 1950s.[73] In terms of the Sturdy-Stone murals this influence, distilled through other equally important ones, is strongly evident in Victor Cicansky's *Old Working Class* and *New Working Class,* and somewhat apparent in Robert Billyard's *Prairie Themes* and Randy Woolsey's "Prairie" and "Sun" murals on the tenth floor. The references in these murals suggest the folk art movement during this period was undoubtedly employed by the ceramicists, accepted by the government, and appreciated by the public.

An exhibition curated by Norah McCullough "Folk Painters of the Canadian West," was shown at the National Gallery of Canada during the 1959 summer season, and subsequently toured Canada.[74] Newly appointed as the Western Liaison Officer for the National Gallery of Canada, McCullough had previously been the executive director of the SAB where she was instrumental in promoting local craft and ceramics communities through adult education initiatives, a position that made her aware of the opportunities for, and needs of, various Saskatchewan arts communities.[75] Six folk painters, including Saskatchewan painter Jan Wyers, were shown in the National Gallery exhibition, a coveted venue understood as a mark of professional achievement, but their untutored status was emphasized in the exhibition title that included a reversed "s" at the end of "painter." Other remarks in the text also highlighted their separateness from the accepted parameters of professional art practices, such as "no claim to artistic excellence," "a pleasant contrast to the more sophisticated type of exhibition," and "genuine simplicity." The National Gallery's director, Alan Jarvis, even denied in his foreward remarks any historical links or commonality "with the recognized folk painters of Europe, past and present,"[76] divorcing the Canadians' work from mechanisms of transmitted knowledge, isolating them artistically and historically, and consequently situating them solely within constructions of Canada. While McCullough emphasized the exhibition's folk paintings had a "child-like innocence," she contextualized the work within folk art in general. Importantly she also noted that most of the folk artists were East-European immigrants, justifying the exhibition

[73] This move towards finding a place for folk art and abstract art in art discourse was found throughout North America at this time, including Québec.Thanks to Dr. Dominic Hrady for pointing this out.
[74] Norah McCullough, *Folk Painters of the Canadian West, 27 May -12 September 1960*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1960).
[75]Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," in Long, 2005, 12.
[76] Alan Jarvis, "Foreword," *Folk Painters of the Canadian West, 27 May -12 September 1960*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1960).

in light of the possible disappearance of folk art in North America, presumably through assimilation to the Anglo-Saxon dominant culture.[77]

Folk art was elided with traditional crafts as both emerged from classes or cultures outside the dominant Anglo-Saxon middle class. Canadian craft historian Sandra Alfoldy notes that in 1966 for the national touring exhibition, *Canadian Fine Craft,* Daniel Rhodes, Alfred University ceramicist and professor and exhibition juror, understood and acknowledged how traditional crafts were influencing contemporary craft designs. For Rhodes traditional crafts were tied to a "synthesis of method, material, function and meaning," often missing when makers attempted to move them into the "fine" craft realm.[78] This was a transitional time for the works of the "folk" regarding their reception in the craft, art, and academic worlds. In Saskatchewan some of the painters of The Regina Five also developed an interest in the folk paintings of Jan Wyers. Although Wyers' paintings were collected by fellow painters, museum directors and art galleries, according to Ronald Bloore, director of the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery and champion of Wyers' work, they were not considered as legitimate art by many in the Regina community. Bloore described the encounter between Wyers and himself in 1960 as a meeting of "painters," emphasizing the respect he had for Wyers and the non-hierarchical nature of their relationship as artists. He also remarked that New York painter and participant in the Emma Lake workshops, Barnett Newman, did not understand his professional interest in this folk art.[79] The conceptual gap between Saskatchewan artists with their concerns for the acknowledgement of, and the appreciation for, a variety of local voices and practices, and central Canada with its New York school direction is highlighted by Jarvis' catalogue text, and the disbelief of New York painter, Newman. Bloore's enthusiasm for Wyers' work was reflected in an essay written for *Canadian Art* at the time of the 1960 National Gallery exhibition, and his championing of a purchase by the MacKenzie Art Gallery.[80] Within Saskatchewan art circles folk art was considered at least legitimate enough to form part of a major public collection as institutions such as the Mackenzie Gallery and even the SAB made a point of including it.

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[77] McCullough, "Folk Painters of the Canadian West," 1960.
[78] Sandra Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity: The Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada,* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press), 102.
[79] Ronald Bloore, foreword to *Jan Gerrit Wyers 1888-1973,* by Andrew Oko (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery, 1989), 9.
[80] Ronald Bloore, "Jan G. Wyers," *Artscanada* 17, no.3 (March 1960): 60-65; Bloore, 1989, 7-10. At this time the Mackenzie Art Gallery was called the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery.

The importance to the Saskatchewan art community of the interconnectedness of folk and fine art was made quite clear several years later in 1976, the year the Saskatchewan Olympics Art Committee commissioned an installation, *The Grain Bin*, as Saskatchewan's art contribution to the 1976 Montréal Olympics. This installation was based on a fusion of the ubiquitous Prairie grain bin found in every farmyard, a humble example of vernacular architecture, with paintings and miniature three-dimensional scenes executed by Regina area sculptors working alongside folk artists.[81] Such a cooperative project suggests Saskatchewan artists were moving away from the salvage paradigm, alluded to by McCullough a few years earlier. The new approach acknowledged the continual dialogue that was actually occurring between sculptors and painters who had received post-secondary education in the "fine arts," with those whose education was based upon more informal networks. Folk art as a style and craft material as media were increasingly legitimized as markers of Saskatchewan's culture. The intermingling of the abstract modern art movement with the prairie folk art movement is evident in the variety of mural projects installed in the Sturdy-Stone Centre, and will be elaborated upon in later chapters that specifically address each mural project.

Figure 16: *Grain Bin*, mixed media, 1976

[81] David Thauberger, "The Grain Bin," *Artscanada,* no. 230/231 (Oct./Nov. 1979): 6-7; See also Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Redefining the Role," in *Visions, Contemporary Art in Canada,* eds. Robert Bringhurst, Alvin Balkind, Russell Keziere, (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 128, illustration p.131. The sculptors included Victor Cicansky, Joe Fafard, David Thauberger and Russ Yuristy,, while the folk artists were represented by Frank Cicansky, Eva Dennis, Wesley Dennis, Ann Harbuz, Molly Lenhardt, W.C. McCarger, Harvey McInnis, Fred Moulding, Linda Olafsen, Sam Spencer and Jeanne Thomarat.

Legitimization of folk art by academic and cultural institutions meant it would be increasingly accepted as a viable artistic expression throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The renewed interest in folk art happening in Canada was also simultaneously occurring in the United States. There, folk studies were becoming popular throughout the 1960s and 1970s, decades that have been identified within American literature as a period that saw the "coalescence of contemporary folk art as a field of action, interest and meaning."[82] As an academic discipline it was considered to be at a turning point with a great interest in the subject among undergraduates and an inability within many academic institutions to take advantage of, or follow up, this interest.[83] In 1977 The Winterthur Folk Art Conference and exhibition spawned a rash of a papers in various academic journals, which, even if they did not reach the general public, did keep the subject alive in academic, museological and curatorial circles.[84] Two central publications associated with the exhibition and conference served to intensify studies around folk art resulting in an increased awareness among collectors of the political and social issues connected to folk art such as ethnicity and class, issues that are particularly evident in Cicansky's *Old Working Class* and *New Working Class* murals. [85]

Canadian publications were also dedicated to Canadian folk art in the mid-1970s. In *A People's Art: Primitive, Provincial, and Folk Painting in Canada,* 1974, art historian J. Russell Harper recognized the lack of Canadian information about "the subject of primitives" had resulted in " a virtual vacuum…in the public mind."[86] This link between "primitive" and "folk" was exactly the assumption that Kenneth Ames' catalogue essay for the Winterthur exhibition contested. Harper also emphasized, as had the early twentieth-century Canadian anthropologist and collector of folk art and folk lore, Marius Barbeau,[87] the connections between folk art and the crafts, particularly within the Eastern European immigrant communities in Western Canada

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[82] Julia S. Ardery, *The Temptation: Edgar Tolson and the Genesis of Twentieth-Century Folk Art*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2.
[83] Richard M. Dorson et al, "The Academic Future of Folklore," in Annual Report of the American Folklore Society, Supplement, *The Journal of American Folklore* 85, (May 1972): 104-125.
[84] Ardery, 214.
[85] Kenneth L. Ames, *Beyond Necessity: Art in the Folk Tradition*, (Winterthur, Delaware: The Winterthur Museum), 1977; Ian M.G. Quimby and Scott T. Swank, *Perspectives on American Folk Art,* (Winterthur, Delaware: The Winterthur Museum, 1980); Ardery, 210-14.
[86] J. Russell Harper, *A People's Art: Primitive, Provincial, and Folk Painting in Canada,* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 6.
[87] William J. Taylor, "Director's Foreward," *From the heart: folk art in Canada,* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart with The National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1983), 10.

who created works with "zestful forthrightness."[88] Harper's text brought together universal, national, and regional characteristics and concerns of folk art with criteria for inclusion of works in the book based upon "greater universality of meaning, and innate aesthetic sensibility," but that are nevertheless "closely tied by their local flavour to a time and community."[89] He also attempted to bring to this folk art a national characteristic as well, framing it as emerging from a Canadian environment, where it "grew out of the earth, was nurtured by melting snows and gentle April rains, toughened under scorching Canadian suns, and reached fruition in colourful autumns."[90] Such widespread associations indicate the struggle art historians experienced in situating folk art and craft within existing art hierarchies as well as defining their places within local and national ideologies. In 1983, William Taylor, director of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa pointed out the changing roles of folk art and how values of individual productions and visions along with market pressures inflected its physical expressions. Importantly he pointed out it was now reaching a wider Canadian community beyond the traditional local geographic and ethno-cultural communities it had previously served.[91] The close relationship between the supposedly two antithetical categories, "fine" and "folk" was even recognized within the fine arts academy by Charlotte Townsend-Gault's essay in *Visions: Contemporary Art in Canada,* 1983. She acknowledged folk art as an important influence on contemporary artists, and included as examples of contemporary practice, folk art works that had received institutional recognition, among them a painting by Jan Wyers.[92] There was a move in Canadian cultural institutions to find a home for folk art and craft practices and products and to educate a wide public as to their value, revising the salvage paradigm that had motivated Marius Barbeau a half-century earlier.

Ceramics

Any discussion of the prominence accorded to mural production in Saskatchewan must include the acknowledgment of another institutional support, specifically the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus, which became the University of Regina in 1974. The

[88] Harper, 10.
[89] Ibid, 3-4.
[90] Ibid, 10.
[91] Taylor, 15.
[92] Townsend-Gault, 128, 130-33.

departments who were most implicated include Fine Arts (sculpture and ceramics), Education (art education) and Extension. According to Marilyn Levine who studied ceramics in the 1960s in Regina, the people of Regina were exposed to a vibrant visual culture milieu through the MacKenzie Art Gallery, the Regina School of Art, the SAB, Emma Lake, the Regina Five and the secondary art education program.[93] As Alfoldy has noted, the ceramic vessel with the Leach/Asian tradition was privileged both by the SAB through the community outreach work of Norah McCullough, Patricia Wiens, and Beth Hone, as well as in the Extension Program at the University of Saskatchewan Regina Campus under Beth Hone and Marilyn Levine.[94] When Ricardo Gómez, who had been trained in California, took over the sculpture department of the Regina Campus of the University of Saskatoon in 1964, he saw a need to move clay beyond "the strict confines of the basics"[95] [the vessel] and introduced clay sculpture. With his hiring of Jack Sures in 1965 to head the ceramics program,[96] the vessel tradition continued to be privileged in the ceramic studio, but more highly refined, with an attention to surface effects resulting in pots, described by Sures' student Marilyn Levine, as "luscious." She also noted Sures did not encourage clay sculpture, directing people to the sculpture department.[97] While Sures did not oppose clay sculpture, it was not part of his ceramic studio practice. Primarily he was key to developing the prestige of the ceramic department in terms of vessel production, and installed the first gas-fired studio kilns in the province.[98]

A major shift in the approach to clay in Regina occurred in the late 1960s through the dissemination of the California funk clay sculpture movement by Gómez as well as Beth Hone and Ann James through the Hone-James studio. Connections between Regina and the California funk movement have been well documented in the exhibition catalogue, *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making,* particularly in curator Timothy Long's essay of the same title. Saskatchewan ceramicists Victor Cicansky and Marilyn Levine both went to study in California in the late 1960s, and in 1969 California funk clay artist David Gilhooly, a former student of American funk ceramic sculptor, Robert Arneson, was hired to teach ceramics at the University of

[93] Marilyn Levine quoted by Sandra Alfoldy from an email 25 November 2003, in Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 13.
[94] Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 12-13.
[95] Ricardo Gómez, interviewed by Sandra Alfoldy Kingston Ontario, 26 December 2003, quoted in Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 13.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Levine in Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 13.
[98] Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 13.

Saskatchewan, Regina Campus.[99] The influence of Gilhooly during his two-year appointment cannot be overestimated, as his approach to clay sculpture, depending upon what MacKenzie Gallery curator Timothy Long lists as "narrative, anecdote, humour and kitsch," challenged the prevailing "modernist eschewal of extra-formal concerns."[100] This aesthetic intermingling accelerated when Russell Yuristy, hired in 1967, introduced pop art into the Regina campus.[101]

From this arose a body of work known as the Regina Clay Movement that confronted pressing issues such as the hierarchy of the arts and crafts, the canon of Western art history, gender politics, class formation, and political and cultural concerns based on matters arising from rural/urban and regional tensions. Names associated with this loosely configured movement include Victor Cicansky, Joe Fafard, David Gilhooly, Anne James, Marilyn Levine, Russell Yuristy, and later David Thauberger. With exhibitions throughout Canada and internationally Regina Clay put Saskatchewan ceramics on the map.[102] In 1973 they received international and national critical attention as the only ceramicists included in the multimedia exhibition in Paris, *Canada Trajectoires '73*, organized by the Canada Council.[103] The same year, while on a research grant to the University of Saskatchewan, Ron Shuebrook, writing for a London based art magazine, specifically used the term "Regina funk,"[104] tying it to the California ceramic funk movement. One of its key members was Cicansky, whose unique sculptural approach to clay and social commentary resulted in media coverage and exhibition reviews in several art and craft magazines.[105] Regina's Dunlop Gallery was instrumental as well in promoting Saskatchewan's

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[99] Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay,", 14-15. California Funk will be discussed at length in Chapter 7. This movement challenged the dominance of the functional vessel and among its antecedents is pop art. See Robert Held, *Humor, Irony and Wit: Ceramic Funk From the Sixties and Beyond,* (Arizona: Arizona State University Museum: 2004).

[100] Timothy Long, "Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making,* ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2005), 27.

[101] Ibid, 25.

[102] Ibid, 32.

[103] Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, *Canada Tragectoires 73: Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris du 14 juin au 15 août 1973,* Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 1973. In her opening remarks, museum curator, Suzanne Pagé, dedicates the least textual and analytical space to this ceramic work among all the other media. Pagé's comments on the ceramics do not even cover two textual lines, compared to a minimum of four for film, video, painting and sculpture. While ceramics is the first medium presented in the catalogue, Terrence Heath's, two paragraph introductory text, "Les Céramistes de Regina," is the shortest of all the introductory texts.

[104] Ron Shuebrook, "Regina funk," *Art&Artists* 8, no.8 (August 1973): 39; Olga Korper Gallery Inc., Ron Shuebrook, Artist CV, http://www.olgakorpergallery.com/collection/806.

[105] Victor Cicansky, "Contemporary Ceramics II *Tokyo, December 1971-February 1972," Artscanada*, no. 166-168 (Spring 1972): 76-77; Terrence Heath, "The Regina Ceramists," *Artscanada* 30, (May 1973): 68; David Zack, *Vie des Arts,* no.67 (1972): 70-71; Mikhail Zakin, "New York/Clay," *Craft Horizons* 35, (Dec.1975): 53. Regina Ceramists is a loose term as it was originally used for a 1973 exhibition in Paris, *Canada Trajectoires* that included

ceramic movement through its vigorous exhibition program in the 1960s and 1970s. Both the innovative and more traditional ceramicists and ceramics were assured regular visibility, and as such kept the ceramics community in the sights of both SAB and the Provincial Government, located, as they were, in Regina.[106] By 1976, the year when the Sturdy-Stone ceramic mural commissions were issued, the Regina Clay movement had begun to disperse.[107]

Towards the end of the decade writers started to put a distance between the work of these Regina ceramicists and California, reconfiguring the context of the ceramics to focus specifically on Prairie culture, folk art and an agrarian lifestyle. Interest in Prairie folk art and all that term implied had become important to the Regina ceramicists in the early 1970s, partly because of the Davis funk influence which accepted "folk" as a legitimate historical and stylistic reference, and partly because several of the ceramicists had grown up with the practice of folk arts or "ethnic arts" within their families and communities. The familial influence of folk art on the rural imagery, and even style, of Joe Fafard and Vic Cicansky, artists born and bred on the Prairies, has often been cited,[108] and Cicansky himself has honoured his father's folk painting.[109] An exhibition on Saskatchewan folk art was arranged at the Dunlop Gallery in 1971 and by 1982 Susan Whitney was carrying folk art in her Regina gallery that had opened in 1980. Cicansky's father, a folk artist who represented Saskatchewan rural life, exhibited his "craft" in 1971 and his "art" in 1982.[110] Cicansky's colleague, Thauberger, curated a 1976 Mackenzie Art Gallery exhibition, *Grassroots Saskatchewan*, that included paintings, drawings and sculptures representing rural life by sixteen Saskatchewan artists who had no professional training. In this

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Victor Cicansky, Joe Fafard, David Gilhooly (who had moved to Ontario) Ann James, Marilyn Levine and Russell Yuristy, but has expanded to include others whose work has affinities in style and subject matter. Long, "Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making," 22-23. For the most thorough analysis of this period see as well: Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 11-15; Howard, 59-65: Julia Krueger, "A Feminist lens on Six Female Ceramists in Regina, *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making,* ed. Timothy Long (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery, 2005) 51-56.

[106] Wayne Morgan, "Regional Context: The Dunlop Art Gallery and Community," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making*, ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery, 2007), Virtual Museum of Canada, http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/regina/english/documents/regional_context.html, accessed 12 July 2012.

[107] Long, "Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making," 32-37.

[108] An early mention of this in terms of Fafard appeared in a National Film Board movie on Fafard. *I Don't Have to Work That Big,* directed by Michael McKennirey, (National Film Board, 1973), *http://www.nfb.ca/film/i_dont_have_to_work_that_big*, accessed 19 Jan 2011.

[109] Kevin Forrest, "Regina Clay: The Art of Invention and Interpretation," *Arts West* 7, no. 10 (Nov. 1982): 16.

[110] Don Kerr, *The Garden of Art: Vic Cicansky Sculptor*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 20.

exhibition, the participants were referred to as "artists" and their work as "art."[111] In much the same way the abstract painting movement and the folk art movement interacted in Saskatchewan, the Regina Clay Movement existed side-by-side with the modernist- functionalist approach to clay, each fuelling the other. This interplay is carried out on the exterior and interior walls of the Sturdy-Stone Centre.

Saskatchewan Arts Board (SAB)

These multiple interactions were fostered by the SAB, an advocate for Saskatchewan culture and culture producers since 1948, who arranged arts and crafts training and exhibitions throughout the province. The SAB, originally modelled on the British Arts Councils, but adapted for the realities of Western Canada, was initially established by an order-in-council on an experimental basis, followed by the Arts Board Act a year later. [112] This was considered one of the most important innovative measures of the Douglas CCF government, and like the CCF's election itself, the SAB was unique in North America.[113] A 1978 history of this institution, stated unequivocally: "Much of the present surge of creative work in the arts in Saskatchewan can be traced directly to the work of the Saskatchewan Arts Board." The Board methodically assembled a collection of "handicraft" as well as painting and sculpture that has served as "an important document of the development of the arts in the province." It was also instrumental in "an upsurge of creative activity in new forms [of handicraft] as well as a revival of some of the traditional crafts of the native people and the various ethnic groups in Saskatchewan."[114] George Shaw, Executive Director of the SAB, (1961-1968),[115] along with Sheila Stiven, an SAB consultant, encouraged studio ceramics by opening a ceramic shop in Regina in the early 1960s, a clear indication Alfoldy suggests, that at this time Regina already had "an audience for ceramics." [116] Shaw also reached out to the ceramics community in 1965, with a letter to potter and educator

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[111] Carol Phillips, "Introduction," and David Thauberger, "Grassroots Saskatchewan: The Artists," in *Grassroots Saskatchewan, July 18 to August 15, 1976 Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery,* (Regina: Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, University of Regina, 1976).
[112] W.A. Riddell, *Cornerstone for Culture: A History of the Saskatchewan Arts Board from 1948 to 1978,* (Regina, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Arts Board, 1979), 6.
[113] W.A. Riddell, "Preface," in Riddell, v.
[114] The SAB made no clear distinction between the terms "handicraft" and "craft," but "handicraft" appears to be associated with what was considered amateur production, and "craft" with professional or traditional practices.
[115] Riddell, 44.
[116] Jack Sures, telephone interview by Sandra Alfoldy, 29 July 2004, quoted in Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," 12, 13. The shop was located at River Heights Shopping Centre, Regina.

Jack Sures of the Regina College of Art inviting him to participate in a conference to discuss ways in which the Board might assist Saskatchewan craftspeople. [117] In 1968, following years of impermanent locations, the Saskatchewan School of the Arts, supported by the SAB became permanently located (until 1991) at "Fort San", near Fort Qu'Appelle in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Painters, sculptors and potters, among others, congregated for workshops and to give classes principally during the summer months in the facilities owned by the provincial government and known formally as the Echo Valley Centre.[118] It was through the "Fort San" summer workshops that James Ellemers, the SAB consultant involved with the Sturdy-Stone artwork, came into contact with many of the ceramicists he eventually contracted for the Sturdy-Stone mural project.

Among the initiatives of the SAB's very early years, along with the collection program, was their emphatic message to the government of "the importance of assisting Saskatchewan artists by commissioning them to produce artworks such as murals or sculptures for public buildings."[119] In 1972, the NDP government created the Department of Culture and Youth and the SAB became part of its mandate. Another far-reaching shift occurred in 1974 with the establishment of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sports Culture and Recreation, which provided funding support for non-profit volunteer organizations, including the SAB.[120] By the end of the 1970s the SAB had shifted in the government bureaucracy once again, and was placed under the Department of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports, which oversees the SAB to this day.[121] During this tumultuous period in the province's reorganization of the cultural bureaucracy, the Saskatchewan Crafts Council was formed.

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[117] Letter from N. George Shaw, executive director Saskatchewan Arts Board to Jack Sures, September 21, 1965, Box 14 File 215: Organizations, Saskatchewan Arts Board, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections,

[118] Riddell, 32. Fort San was the location of Saskatchewan's TB Sanatorium from 1917 until the late 1960s. David McLennan, "Fort San," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/fort_san.html, accessed 9 July 2012.

[119] Riddell, 3, 4 6, 8.

[120] "About Us: Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund," Saskatchewan Lotteries, http://www.sasklotteries.ca/sk/about_us/SLTF.html, accessed 13 Feb. 2012; "About Us," Saskatchewan Arts Board, http://www.artsboard.sk.ca/about-us, accessed 13 Feb, 2012.

[121] "Parks, Culture and Sport," Government of Saskatchewan, http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/Culture, accessed 13 Feb. 2012.

Saskatchewan Crafts Council (SCC)

The SCC was founded in 1975 to promote the specific interests of professional Saskatchewan craftspeople. As part of its "roots," the SCC history mentions branches of the Women's Art Association and the National Council of Women, such as the Saskatoon Arts and Crafts Society (1924-1956) that emerged from the Arts and Crafts Committee of the Saskatoon Local Council of Women, whose members promoted "high quality traditional work, mainly textiles."[122] In 1948 the Saskatoon Arts and Crafts Society provided the SAB with one of its founding members, Mrs. Vivian Morton, who became an advocate for Saskatchewan crafts, and by the end of its first year the SAB had formed a "Handicrafts Committee."[123] Since 1948 the activities of the Saskatchewan crafts communities had always been well supported through the SAB. However, with the restructuring of the SAB, coupled with the 1974 establishment of the Canadian Crafts Council (CCC), a national organization formed through the amalgamation of two competing national organizations, the Canadian Craftsman's Association and the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts,[124] the Saskatchewan crafts community was compelled to consider other means to promote their interests.

Tensions between the needs and priorities of amateur and professional craftspeople as well as the differences between the fine arts and the crafts, understood as certain materials and associated mainly with the functional, clearly emerged in the 1970s. This was partly instigated by the rise in prominence of the Regina Clay Movement and the initial tentative forays into architectural commissions for craftspeople. The founding conference of the SCC and subsequent meetings addressed the need to define professional craft and professional craftspeople. These concerns were disseminated through their magazine, *The Craft Factor* including remarks on the jurying process at the provincial craft show, Battleford, provided by jurors, Victor Cicansky and Robert Billyard,[125] ceramicists who both contributed murals to the Sturdy-Stone mural program.

[122] Sandra Flood, "In the Beginning: The Early Years of the Saskatchewan Craft Council," *The Craft Factor,* (Fall/Winter, 2000): 1.
[123] Ibid, 1-2.
[124] For a detailed discussion of the formation of the CCC see Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity*, 2005, 159-199.
[125] Victor Cicansky, "Jurors' Reports," *The Craft Factor* 5, no. 3 (Sept. 1980): 5; Robert Billyard, "Jurors' Reports," *The Craft Factor* 6, no. 4 (Sept. 1981): 7.

In the fall of 1976, Woolsey, another Study-Stone muralist, declined to be nominated for a position on the SCC board. [126]

Professional standards in the crafts and professional conduct by Canadian craftspeople were clearly a concern throughout the 1960s and into the 1980s. This was especially evident with the 1965 formation of the Canadian Council for the Environmental Arts/ Conseil Canadien pour les arts de l'espace, changed later that year to the Canadian Craftsmen's Association/Fédération canadienne des métiers d'art, which subsequently amalgamated with the Canadian Guild of Handicrafts'Guilde canadienne des métiers d'art in 1974 to form the Canadian Crafts Council/Conseil canadien des métiers d'art.[127] As Alfoldy demonstrates in her documentation of the rise of professional Canadian craft practice, the frequent name changes and shifts in directional focus at the national level indicate a highly charged and contested playing field around the emergence of the professional craftsperson. Saskatchewan was not immune to these ideological shifts: two months before the founding conference of the SCC in October 1975, there had been an attempt to establish a Saskatchewan "Designer Craftsman" association by University of Saskatchewan ceramics professor, James Thornesbury along with Peter Weinrich and Orland Larsen, Executive Director and Director of the Canadian Craft Council, respectively.[128] At the founding meeting of the Saskatchewan Crafts Council, Thornesbury pointed out the need for a provincial crafts council was related to funding access for craft available through the federal government, specifically pointing out the federal government distinguished between craft and art.[129] The SCC was interested in the "business" aspect of producing and marketing crafts as well as the development of a "professional" craft community, a focus clearly expressed in their first meeting.[130] The importance of the clay movement in Saskatchewan at that time is also reflected in the number of potters, ten of the eighteen committee members, represented on the committee

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[126] "Minutes of the 6th Board Meeting of the SCC," Sept. 11, 1976, Book 1. Prince Albert. Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives. At the time Woolsey was working on a design, with Greg Hardy, for the exterior mural of the Sturdy-Stone Centre.

[127] Sandra Alfoldy deals extensively with the formation of these organizations in Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity*, 5, 49, 158.

[128] Flood, 2000, 2.

[129] Jim Thornesbury, Report from Jim Thornesbury about the Canadian Craft Council," Saskatchewan Craft Council Founding Meeting, Oct. 4 and 5, 1975, Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.

[130] "Founding Conference," "Notes from a Regina Meeting to discuss the formation of a provincial crafts organization" Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives. For a complete discussion of what professionalism in the Canadian craft world meant in the 1960s and 1970s see Sandra Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity: the Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada.* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005).

convened in June 1975 to lay the groundwork for the October founding conference. This high representation of potters was linked without a doubt to the emphasis this committee put upon "in-depth" training in ceramics.[131] Woolsey, a potter and a Sturdy-Stone muralist, developed a working relationship with James Ellemers who regularly interfaced with the crafts community as the Director of the Saskatchewan School of the Arts until the late 1980s.[132] The contact between Woolsey and Ellemers early in the formation of the SCC was based on a project to establish pottery workshops at the Fort San summer school in 1976.[133] In early 1976 the SCC Board drew up a list of standards for crafts people and later that same year the SCC board unanimously passed a motion that highlighted sections of the bylaw regarding professionalism: "to promote and facilitate the growth of craft excellence in Saskatchewan" and "serve as an advisory body on matters of professional interest."[134] The integration of monumental three-dimensional ceramic murals in the Sturdy-Stone Centre was certainly a mark of a professional Saskatchewan ceramics community.

As explained to the fledgling members of the SCC in 1975, the Canadian Craft Council was to be an umbrella organization, comprised of provincial groups that were peer affiliates,[135]and, as such, provincial organization was key if regions wished a national voice. By the second day of the SCC founding conference, it had been reported that funding would be available from the SAB and that "Industry and Commerce" would be "on board" regarding the issues of "quality and standards." However by 1977 SCC funding sources had been transferred to SaskSport as well as Industry and Commerce, in the wake of the restructuring of the SAB.[136] During the founding conference of the SCC, the question of the integration of art and architecture was also raised. It was pointed out that an anonymous architect had mentioned even small businesses were increasingly allocating funding for artworks, and craftspeople should be made aware when such potential commissions were available. The use of local artists for

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[131] Flood, 2000, 3, 5.
[132]James Ellemers, telephone interview with the author, 30 April, 2008; Email from Peter Sametz, Associate Executive Director Saskatchewan Arts Board to the author, 9 Aug. 2010.
[133] "Item 6," Minutes of the Fourth Board Meeting, S.C.C. May 29 1976, Town Office Battleford, Book I, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[134] Minutes from Second Board Meeting Jan. 17 and Jan. 18 1976- Saskatoon, Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives; Minutes of the Sixth Board Meeting S.C.C. Sept. 11 1976 Prince Albert, Book 1 Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives
[135] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Founding Meeting – Oct.4 & 5 1975", Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[136] "2nd Annual Saskatchewan Craft Council Report, Sept. 15, 1977," Book 2, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.

commissions for local buildings was emphasized and a strategy suggested where city councils and other groups should be lobbied to commission or buy Saskatchewan art rather than art from other provinces.[137] Indeed, in 1977 lobbying for an official one-per cent program for public buildings was ongoing with overtures being made to the Minister of the Department of Government Services.[138]

The interest of the membership and board of the SCC in the architectural applications of ceramics was evident through their 1979 decision to pursue "the Merton Chambers (ceramic muralist) workshop" for that summer. This was ultimately filled to capacity, a popularity that prompted them to try to arrange a subsequent Chambers workshop.[139] Chambers was an Ontario muralist who had produced several ceramic murals for public spaces including the Education Centre, Toronto Ontario, 1965 and *Blue Mosaic*, 1966 Government of Ontario MacDonald Block, Toronto.[140] He was also the co-founder of the Environmental Arts Department at Fanshawe College, London Ontario that operated between 1968 and 1975. Its goal was to prepare students for the making of large-scale projects that integrated craft materials into architectural projects. The students studied all aspects involved in the making of slab murals including learning about the structural strengths of materials, evaluating the psychological effects of large-scale projects on the audience, and being introduced to the politics and art of working with architects. The college also reached out to other institutions, establishing ties with the Rochester Institute of Technology and the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto.[141] The popularity of the Chambers workshop was significant as it followed in the wake of the inauguration of the Sturdy-Stone Centre and the publicity given to the mural program. While this appeared after the commissioning and installation of the first set of the Sturdy-Stone murals, it is clear that the SCC was considering the possibilities of future mural commissions.

By 1980, the SCC was actively pursuing the integration of art and architecture. The recently hired executive director announced that a meeting between James Ellemers and Randy

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[137] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Founding Meeting – Oct.4 & 5 1975", "report from Jim Thornesbury about the CCC," Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[138] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting Sat. 5 Nov. 1977," Saskatoon, Book 3, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[139] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting April 28 1979," Saskatoon, Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives; "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting Aug. 17 and 18 1979," Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[140] Anita Aarons, "The Factors in Commissioned Work," *Journal RAIC- L'IRAC* 42, no. 3 (March 1965): 22.
[141] Gail Crawford, *Studio Ceramics in Canada,* (Toronto: Gardiner Museum of Ceramics and Fredericton New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2005), 129-30.

Woolsey of the SCC had resulted in the establishment of a committee to advise the Department of Supply and Services regarding the acquisition of artworks for the T.C. Douglas Building in Regina and the second round of murals for the Sturdy-Stone Centre. An open competition for the artworks was recommended to the government.[142] This was followed two months later with the report that the SAB would contact all Saskatchewan artists and craftspeople regarding this open competition for the T.C. Douglas Building in Regina as well as for "further work for the Sturdy-Stone Centre."[143] Two months later many responses to the SAB mailout had been received regarding these two projects, and the selection proceeded.[144]

The SCC was consistently vigorous in its networking strategies with both the SAB and the provincial government, and they found a friend and supporter in Premier Blakeney. Blakeney had actually been the minister responsible for the SAB for two periods, 1959-1961 and 1971-1972.[145] Within its first year, the SCC chairman, Bob Dalby, had met with Premier Blakeney in a "lengthy interview," and found him to be well informed regarding the SAB and the Ministry of Culture and Youth, and receptive to the SCC presentation. He also reported the Premier wished to be kept informed of the SCC's activities through their newsletters, and copies of their grant submissions. From this visit came a proposal for V.I.P. souvenirs to be provided to the government.[146] As Premier, Blakeney regularly appeared, presented awards, and was frequently photographed at the SCC's exhibitions, especially the summer juried show at Battleford.[147] In 1977 while presenting the award for the best handcrafted object at the Battleford Festival he stated: "The government believes it is important to encourage craft skills in Saskatchewan…We already have some of the best talent in Canada and by encouraging further development of excellence we will be investing in the growth of an industry with great potential."[148] The SCC executive decided to pursue the advantage they had from Premier Blakeney's support, drafting a

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[142] "Minion's Report," Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting, Jan. 19, 1980, Book 5, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[143] "Minion Report" Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting Feb. 17 1980, Book 5, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[144] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting April 8 1980, Book 5, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[145] "Appendix A: Ministers Responsible for the Saskatchewan Arts Board," in Riddell, 44.
[146] "Minutes from the Second Board Meeting, Jan. 17 and 18, 1976, Saskatoon, Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[147] See: "Premier Blakeney announces Kaija Harris tapestry, *Fall*, is tops at Battleford," *The Craft Factor* 2, no.2 (July 1977): 10; *The Craft Factor* 3, no.3 (Aug. 1978): cover picture; *The Craft Factor* 6, no.3 (Sept. 1981): 6, 7.
[148] Premier Allan Blakeney quoted in "Battleford 1977: Award for Best Handcraft at Festival," *The Craft Factor* 2, no.2 (July 1977): 10.

letter to him in 1979 regarding their "desire to have input into [cultural policy]". The answer, received from the Minister of Culture and Youth, Ned Shillington, assured them they would be called upon "after the policy is formal."[149] The SCC campaign continued with the decision to submit a brief to the government's newly established Cultural Secretariat who was to advise the cabinet on provincial cultural policy.[150] Their strategy to retain close formal and informal ties with the government was evident as that same year it invited Premier and Mrs. Blakeney to their annual Regina Christmas exhibition, Wintergreen.[151] This was clearly a premier and a government who had an interest in the arts and crafts and who were sympathetic to the needs and goals of the craft community, but at the same time, the SCC was aware that it must keep its profile high to maintain this sympathetic interest. Both the SCC and Premier Blakeney benefited from a close association. The SCC was seen as receiving support from the highest levels of government, which increased its legitimacy to its own membership, while Blakeney appeared as a supporter of the crafts community at a grass roots level, framing him within the culture of the people.

Simultaneously the SCC also retained close ties with the SAB, seeking to protect its interests within the context of the SAB's larger mandate. In 1976 the SCC suggested the SAB hire a "full-time crafts consultant," pointing out the SAB craft workshops in Fort San (Qu'Appelle Valley) had been "non-selective" of participants, and suggesting it should focus on the "semi-professional craftsperson."[152] SAB consultant Ellemers operated as the liaison between the SCC and the SAB regarding these concerns of the SCC, and in the autumn of 1976 the SCC actively engaged in a campaign to have a presence on the board of the SAB.[153] During this period, Ellemers, as contracted by the SAB was also actively recruiting ceramicists to present proposals for Sturdy-Stone murals, and therefore was closely involved with the ceramic community in particular. The SCC nominated their chairman, Bob Dalby, "for consideration to appointment to the board of the SAB," and also decided to institute a letter campaign from their

[149] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting March 17 1979," Saskatoon, Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[150] "The Saskatchewan Craft Council 4th Annual General Meeting Saskatoon Oct. 26-27, Chairman's Report" Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[151] Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting, Aug. 17 and 18 1979, Wintergreen Report" Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[152] "Minutes from the fourth Board Meeting, May 29, 1975, Town Office Battleford, May 29, 1975, Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[153] "Minutes from the fourth Board Meeting, May 29, 1975, Town Office Battleford, May 29, 1975: Agenda for Board Meeting of S.C.C. Directors," Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.

membership directed at the Department of Culture and Youth with the motion that: "The S.C.C. be considered as an advisory body in the selection of the consultant to replace the Retiring Visual Arts Consultant of the Saskatchewan Arts Board." This was to be followed with a letter to the ministry regarding the upcoming appointments to the SAB.[154] Such a request demonstrates the SCC regarded the SAB as exercising considerable power within the government regarding funding for the arts, and for continued financial support needed to ensure a sympathetic Visual Arts Consultant would replace the retiring one. When the SCC funding was finally repositioned under the SaskSport Board, the SCC nominated Lee Collins for one of the four culture positions out of a total of twelve. Collins, who had just left the SAB as the Visual Arts Consultant, was a known supporter of the crafts, and under her direction, the SAB had purchased several works from Jack Sures.[155] The SCC continued into the following year to consolidate its interests in an increasingly complex bureaucratic situation, with a motion at its general meeting that the cultural section of the SaskSports trust be administered in trust by the SAB.[156] Its lobbying strategies were effective, and by the end of the decade the SCC was receiving funding from the SAB, SaskSports Trust, the Department of Culture and Youth and the Department of Industry and Commerce.[157] A close association with the SAB continued to be advantageous. In 1980, the SCC, along with the SAB and "Celebrate Saskatchewan," initiated a provincial craft collection that would "ensure that representative examples by Saskatchewan artists [were] available for future public viewing."[158] The SCC consistently shifted its strategies and alliances to take advantage of funding opportunities to ensure its continued existence, to legitimize itself to its membership, and to gain prominence on the national stage, each of which, obviously contributed to the success of the other. This constant tactical manoeuvring of its members and board served to put this new organization into positions of influence when it came to the introduction of ceramics into the architectural program for the Sturdy-Stone Centre. Its maintenance and

[154] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting, Regina, Oct. 9, 1976," Book 2, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives; "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting, Regina, Nov. 1, 1976," Book 2, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[155] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Board Meeting Sat. 5 Nov. 1977 Saskatoon," Book 3, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives; Jack Sures, email to the author, 22 Aug. 2011.
[156] "Third Annual General Meeting of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Oct. 28 1978, Regina," Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[157] "Third Annual General Meeting of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Oct. 28 1978, Regina, Vice-Chairman's Report," Book 4, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[158] Anon, "Festival 80," *Saskatchewan Arts Board,* 2 No.3 (Winter 1980): 1.

reformations of institutional and personal alliances during organizational shifts was crucial for the success of the Sturdy-Stone murals.

Conclusion

Sociologist Bruno Latour suggests that an Actor-Network-Theory account is particularly useful when looking at shifting group formation, unstable alliances, and the means by which groups are formed and held together.[159] This offers a useful approach to address the Sturdy-Stone Centre and the ceramic murals on and in it, which at one level form a group, a particularly structurally stable one for the time being, but one that at its inception only came about because of the shifts in and reformations among other groups – most notably the SAB, SCC, the NDP, immigrant populations, and art department faculties. By tracing how the human actors, including, but not limited to, James Ellemers, Premier Blakeney, Ronald Bloore, and Jack Sures instigated changes in organizations such as the SAB, SCC, Regina Art College, and the Mackenzie Art Gallery through policy recommendations, published art texts, studio philosophies, and collection practices this chapter traced what has been termed "contexts." Following the methodology of ANT I have brought "this very activity of contextualizing … into the foreground;" thus group formations are consistently tied to the reasons for the construction and decoration of the Sturdy-Stone Centre.[160] Works and exhibitions such as *The Grain Bin*, "Folk Painters of the Canadian West," and texts found in *A People's Art: Primitive, Provincial, Folk Painting in Canada*, *Visions: Contemporary Art in Canada),* and *Arts West*, all impacted on the reception of the commission proposals and the final works. Ideas such as abstract art, folk art, crafts, and professionalism were circulated and promulgated within institutions including Emma Lake, Fort San, Regina Arts College, National Gallery of Canada, Mackenzie Art Gallery, and The Winterthur Folk Art Conference that again acted upon and were promoted by key people through texts and practices. These all came together in a complex web of actions that helped create physical, ideological, economic, and aesthetic space for the Sturdy-Stone murals. These enumerations are not an exhaustive list, and in the chapters that follow they will be added to, but they do start to trace the networks of associations that actively create the social in this account.

[159] Latour, 2007, 32-34.
[160] Ibid, 186.

Ideas about what constitutes Canadian identity, civic membership, and cultural legitimacy circulated within and through provincial and national institutions reflecting, transmitting, and impacting cultural policy that was ultimately expressed in these murals. The social, cultural, and economic policies of this particular provincial government both responded to and propelled grass roots movements such as the SAB and the SCC that interacted with changes in cultural and educational movements and institutions including the Regina Arts College. While these conditions could be understood as an umbrella under which the murals came into being, in fact they are not passive but active processes. Cultural policies such as multiculturalism, social policies that targeted the working and middle classes, and economic policies of nationalization of key industries provoked, encouraged, even authorized ceramic mural production, the ceramicists' choices of visual vocabulary and, as we shall see later, processes of production. The group formations traced here acted as mediators, as described by Latour, that have somehow changed the organizational, aesthetic and philosophical elements they enacted, and by doing so played a key role in the coming-into-being of the Sturdy-Stone Centre mural project.[161] This chapter has "follow[ed] the actors themselves," to determine their sets of associations, to define the groups of which they are members, and by so doing has traced the beginnings of the Sturdy-Stone mural program through introducing key movements, institutions, concerns, practices and attitudes. Because ANT does not limit itself to human group formations, but pays attention to non-human ones and hybrid groups, the following two chapters will add architecture and materials to the sociology of associations involved in forming the unit consisting of the Sturdy-Stone Centre and its murals.

[161] Latour, 2007, 27, 39. Mediators can transform, translate, distort, and modify, among other actions, the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry.

CHAPTER TWO

ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATION: DESIGNING MATERIALS

Introduction

While the Sturdy-Stone Centre may be closely linked through its name to sturdiness and durability, with a foot in the past and one in the future, its present incarnation was the result of fluid and ephemeral processes, involving much discussion and reams of paperwork in the form of government letters and memos, building plans, and press releases. In this chapter I document the practices and concerns involved in the commissioning of the building and murals, paying close attention to their integration into Saskatoon's downtown core. I draw upon government and craft council archives, journal articles, architectural publications and interviews, using the sociology of associations to determine how, when, and why decisions were made within the City of Saskatoon and the Provincial Government Departments, and how protest groups impacted on the coming-into-being of the murals and their ultimate agency within the Sturdy-Stone social unit. This chapter addresses the complex receptions of the initial design and the realized construction and the roles the murals played in its guarded public approbation. Here, I track the interactions of material culture from the initial proposals, concerns, and negotiations through to the building's opening that set in motion or modified the coming-into-being of the mural project. These interchanges involved provincial government departments, the Saskatoon city council, the architects, and art and culture organizations such as the SAB and the SCC. By mapping the shifting formations of various groups comprising the building, murals, civic and provincial government and occupants, I explore the mechanisms involved in the co-constitution of the building, the murals, the arts community, and the Blakeney government, considering the kind of identities constituted.

Designing Networks

Commissioning the Sturdy-Stone Centre

The commissioning and building of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, initially known as the Provincial Office Building was part of a refurbishment of the downtown Saskatoon core. Called the Central Business District, this area was "regarded as the centre and heart of the city's financial, administrative and commercial activities," and the city considered the new Provincial

Office Building would "re-inforce (sic) the development of a government service district in Saskatoon."[1] Downtown Saskatoon in the 1950s was bordered by 23rd Street, 1st Avenue, 20th Street, and 3rd Avenue, but in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s this sector accrued real estate value as major modern building projects were completed, precipitated by the removal of the downtown rail yards.[2] The historical key commercial buildings in the core were six to eight stories in height, and most had been built during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The Sturdy-Stone Centre is located in this traditional downtown core, on a site chosen jointly by the city and the province because of its contiguity with the new modern civic buildings including the City Hall, the main Saskatoon library, and the main Police Station, its access to public transport, and the potential of its contribution to a "quiet recreational area" offered through its proximity to "the green belt" around the City Hall.[3] The Provincial Office Building was to integrate into and enhance an already strategically developed city centre.

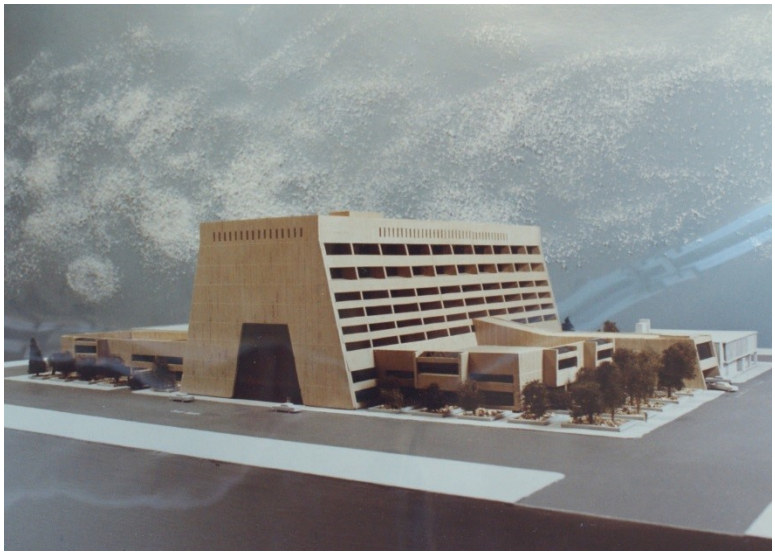

Figure 17: Provincial office Building Design submitted by Roger Walls, 1975, West façade

[1] Letter from J.R. Jones City Planning Officer to Mr. Brian Woodcock, Accommodation Planner, Department of Government Services, January 11, 1974, R 1613 File 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board. For a critique of this revitalization strategy widespread at the time in many North American mid-size cities, but ultimately a failure see Pierre Filion and Karen Hammond, "The Failure of Shopping Malls as a Tool of Downtown Revitalization in Mid-Size Urban Areas," *Plan Canada*, (Winter 2006): 49-52.
[2] William P. Delainey and William A.S. Sargeant, *Saskatoon The Growth of a City: Part 1: The Formative Years 1882-1960,* (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Environmental Society, 1974), 60.
[3] Department Memo from Brian Woodcock to Ken Kelland Site Selection – Provincial Office Bldg, July 18, 1974, R 1613 File. 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

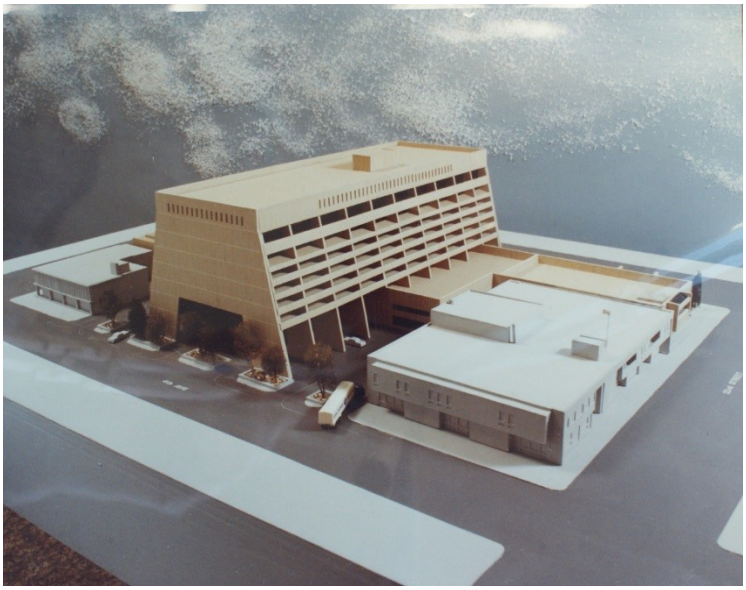

Figure 18: Provincial office Building Design submitted by Roger Walls, 1975, East façade

The Provincial Office Building project in Saskatoon was initiated early in the Blakeney administration in 1972.[4] By July 1973 the Minister of Public Works had approved as consultants the Saskatoon architectural firm Forrester, Scott, Bowers, Cooper and Walls, which had in fact been recommended by the government. They were considered "amply qualified" to undertake the planning and design of the building because they could draw upon a large personnel,[5] but architectural partner Philip Scott suggested the commission may have been secured because of partner Roger Walls' political involvement with and personal connections to the provincial NDP party.[6] Discussions between the City of Saskatoon and the Provincial Government about an appropriate site occupied many months of 1974. Early plans included provisions for office space and retail outlets as the City of Saskatoon wanted to "broaden the city activity area".[7] An initial

[4] Letter from J.E. Brockelbank to Honourable Allen Blakeney, Nov. 1 1972. R 1613 File. 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[5] Department Memo from W.C. Phillips to Mr. Ian F. Rogers, July 9, 1973. R 1613 File 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[6] Philip Scott interview by the author, the Sturdy-Stone Centre, Saskatoon, 21 Sept. 2011.
[7] Department Memo from Ian F. Rogers to Mr. G.H. Beatty, September 20, 1974, R 1613 File 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Report: proposed Provincial Government Building, January 20, 1975, R 1613 File 3.1, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Department memo from Ian F. Rogers to Honourable John E. Brockelbank, Meeting with City of Saskatoon regarding Proposed New Provincial Office Building, February 24, 1975, R 1613 File 3.1 SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Report #6 –Meeting Jan. 22 1975, R 1613 File 3.1 SPMC President's Office. The number adjustment is from "Department memo from D.J. Nevill to D.E. Foley, October 12, 1976, Tenders: General Instruction to Bidders, R 1613 File 3.2 SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

estimate suggested 1000 to 1100 people would work in the building, presumably helping to support these stores, although two years later this estimate was later re-adjusted downwards to 800. The vision of a downtown mall was consistent with a common urban postwar development strategy for midsize cities. Downtown malls were seen as valid alternatives to suburban expansion that would return people to the city core.[8] In terms of this mall the provincial government was aware of its risk as a retail location and early in the planning acknowledged the stores might be converted to offices if the need arose in the future.[9] A later creative suggestion for the ground floor space, rejected because of monetary concerns, was proposed by the University of Saskatoon's Department of Art History who wanted rental space for a proposed Museum of Civilization.[10] The building's office space was to be rented to crown corporations and various government departments, with a primary client being the Department of Social Services. In fact, it was suggested that one of the key reasons this building was created was to accommodate the increased needs of this department.[11] Social Services's varied clientel, including some who reportedly engaged in public glue sniffing, drunkenness, and verbal abuse, was a worry for social service workers in the shared retail space of the building that included a liquor store.[12] However, despite such concerning behaviour, none of the anger, resentment, or recklessness encountered by social service staff has been directed towards the murals, which have never been vandalized. The government envisioned its new construction in Saskatoon as a multi-use building with government offices and retail space, capable of serving people from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances.

Such a range of clientele was not easy to accommodate, however, when taking into consideration the interior design of a building. A 1969 British survey of North American shopping malls, including several Canadian examples, pointed out that for the mall interior design and decoration "…everything is done to concentrate the shopper's eye on the shops and the merchandise displays…All layouts, forms, colour schemes, everything must be selected to

[8] Filion and Hammond, 49.
[9] Project #GS D122: Minutes of Meeting Held August 1, 1975 in Room 218, Legislative Building between representatives of Department of Government Services, their Consultants and special Committee of Saskatoon City Hall," R 1613 3.6, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[10] See 1975 correspondence between Ian F. Rogers and John E. Brockelbank, Michael Swan and Roy Romanow, R 1613 File 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[11] Memorandum from D.J. Neville to P.E. Brown Re Sturdy-Stone Centre Saskatoon, May 31 1979, R 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[12] Letter from Peter Prebble to Honourable Gordon Snyder and Honourable Murray Koskie, March 10 1980, R 1613 File 3.6, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

enhance the trader's merchandise."[13] This commercial requirement was in conflict with the need for the government to impose its own face on the building, and accommodate its departments' clients including Social Services and Correctional Services. For example, one contentious issue for government staff was the close proximity on the same premises of the ground floor self-serve liquor store, installed to generate business for the retail stores, with social services offices on the floor above. Initial retail occupancy of the Sturdy-Stone Centre was varied, including clothing, eyewear and jewellery stores, a florist, photography studio, hair salon, a kitchenware shop, travel agency and several eateries, all designed to appeal to a middle class consumer.[14] Although this reflected what could be expected on a typical commercial street or in a shopping mall, Government Services had no previous experience in mall operation, resulting in a rocky relationship with the Sturdy-Stone Merchants Association over the viability of the retail project and space rentals. The Department of Government Services, although visionary, was not equipped to deal with these new expectations it encountered as it undertook the role of a retail landlord.[15]

An early concern of the retailers involved the disruption to shoppers during the installation of the exterior wall murals in the spring and early summer of 1979. Extensive scaffolding successively blocked first the east and then the west main entrances, and as one tenant explained "the workmen were working around our shop creating noise & dust & especially creating a fantastic amount of inconvenience to our customers." This was considered so disruptive that the merchants demanded a rental reduction as compensation for loss of revenue.[16] The tenants complained as well about a lack of advertising, which the government indicated it had never promised.[17] However, in 1980 it did manage to advertise its public art mural program publishing in late autumn a "Sturdy Stone Artwork Brochure and Poster," that highlighted its commitment to art and the artists in the building. As an option, it considered

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[13] Capital & Counties Property Company Limited, *Shopping For Pleasure: A Survey of shopping centres in North America,* (London: Capital & Counties Property Company Limited, 1969), 20.
[14] Government Services, "Sturdy-Stone Merchants Association Members," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* (Regina: Government of Saskatchewan), back cover.
[15] For examples of correspondence of this contentious relationship see a ten point complaint letter from "R. Gretchen of Kitchen Things to Milton E. Roson, 29 Aug.1979," R 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[16] Letter from R. Gretchen Kitchen Things to Milton E. Rosom, Aug, 26 1979, R 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[17] Letter from M.E. Rosom to R. Gretchen, Kitchen Things, Re Leased Space Sturdy-Stone Centre, Sept.10 1979, R 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

marketing the twenty page coloured publication through the mall merchants; unfortunately the merchants showed "a lack of enthusiasm," only committing collectively to an order of forty out of a projected minimum production run of five thousand. As well the merchants indicated they expected a one hundred percent mark-up. When faced with this lack of merchant cooperation the government decided the Sturdy-Stone information desk staff should sell the brochures instead.[18] Tension obviously existed between the manager and renters of the mall space, and part of this discontent was focussed on the commitment of the government to the artworks. The ground floor retail outlets, aside from the retention of a cafeteria-style restaurant have now disappeared and have been replaced with office spaces.

In February 1975 the architectural firm Forrester, Scott, Bowers, Cooper and Walls submitted three designs to the government for consideration, with the winning one going to Roger Walls' truncated pyramid. Walls (1938-2009) was a young and well-known modernist architect in Saskatoon. His projects included the Frances Morrison Library adjacent to the Sturdy-Stone Centre, the downtown police station across from the Sturdy-Stone centre, and the Education Building at the University of Saskatchewan.[19] The firm was also responsible for the Saskatoon City Hall expansion and the Post Office.[20] The design for the Sturdy-Stone Centre made some effort to accommodate the surrounding modern architecture, incorporating two-storey wings that would relate to the lower buildings in its vicinity such as the Frances Morrison Library. In this way the truncated pyramid shape of the new Provincial Office Building became not only the most unique downtown building shape, but also a focal point on the skyline as a crescendo of rooflines.

[18] Memorandum from Randy Snyder to D.E. Foley, Re Sturdy Stone Artwork and Brochure and Poster, November 3 1980, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[19] Janet French, "Roger Walls, famed Saskatchewan architect, refused treatment after being shot in Honduras, 71," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, (April 8, 2009). http://groups.google.com/group/alt.obituaries/browse_thread/thread/7e47f1bf0b8d50e2?pli=1, accessed 13 Feb. 2012.
[20] Scott, 21 Sept. 2011.

Figure 19: Standard Trusts Building also known as Norfolk Trust Building, 1914

The Saskatoon block recommended by the city and accepted by the province as the site of the new building also included a valued old edifice, the early-twentieth century six-story brick and terra cotta Norfolk Trust Building 1913 (also called the Standard Trusts Building). Located on the corner where the Study Stone Centre would be built, it was, at the end of the Second World War, considered one of the most prominent commercial buildings in the area and one of its first "skyscrapers."[21] The Saskatoon Environmental Society described it in 1974 as a "handsome building," possibly the "best symbol in the city of the optimistic and grandiose architecture of the boom years." Furthermore, "the Historic Building Committee recently set up by City Council was unanimous in considering this the finest commercial block constructed in that period."[22] Its style was linked to the skyscrapers of the early twentieth century in "the east" and specifically to the work of the Midwestern American architect, Louis Sullivan.[23] The Society

[21] Paul Bilodeau, "Downtown Boom Era," *Saskatonian* 1 no. 25, R 1613 File 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Saskatoon Heritage Society, "About Us," http://www.saskatoonheritage.ca/about.html, accessed 10 Jan. 2012; Ken Dahl, assistant City Archivist, City of Saskatoon Archives email to the author, 5 Aug. 2011.
[22] Letter from William A.S. Sargeant President Saskatoon Environmental Society to Hon. Allan Blakeney, Nov. 21, 1974, R 1613 File 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[23] Bilodeau, "Downtown Boom Era."

further suggested the new Provincial Office Building either be designed to "permit the survival and continuation of the Norfolk Trust Building in its present function" or that the building be "incorporat[ed]…as an intrinsic part" of the new Provincial Office Building.[24] The Norfolk Trust Building was clearly valued by many citizens and its destruction was not welcomed.

The importance of this building might better be appreciated within the context of the deterioration at that time of other historic brick buildings in Saskatoon. These at-risk buildings included the Ross and Glengarry Blocks,[25] and this situation stands in stark contrast to the preserved heritage brick and terra cotta buildings of the same era in Moose Jaw. The provincial government asked Walls's firm, already engaged to design the Provincial Office Building, to evaluate the feasibility of retaining the Norfolk Trust Building. The architects, unsurprisingly, decided this was not financially reasonable, citing several concerns: high costs of renovations that would need to include expensive fire safety upgrades, with an ensuing loss of floor space for rental purposes; and added costs to their own design work that had already been undertaken without taking the Norfolk Trust into consideration.[26] The provincial government and eventually the city concurred, albeit the latter with reservations, to forgo granting heritage status to the Norfolk Trust Building.[27] The Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources also pointed out that the extra money needed to integrate the historic Norfolk Trust Building into the new Provincial Office Building would better benefit Saskatoon's "tourism, history and architecture" if it were applied to the preservation of the historic Saskatoon C.P.R. Station.[28] Despite some reluctance on the part of the Saskatoon City Council, the structurally sound Norfolk Trust Building was destroyed to make way for the Sturdy- Stone Centre. The city's acting secretary for

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[24] Letter from William A.S. Sargeant President Saskatoon Environmental Society to Hon. Allan Blakeney, Nov. 21, 1974, R 1613 File 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board. This type of incorporation does exist as evident in Concordia University's incorporation of the façade of the 1912 beaux-arts white terra cotta Royal George Apartments on Bishop St. into the new Library Building in the 1990s.

[25] Bilodeau, "Downtown Boom Era" The seven storey brick Ross Block deteriorated and was demolished in 1986. Patrick Hayes, University of Saskatchewan Archives, "From the Archives: First Downtown Campus," University of Saskatchewan, University Communications ocn On Campus, http://news.usask.ca/archived_ocn/11-may-27/fromthearchives.php, accessed 18 Sept. 2012. The Glengarry Bock has undergone renovations in the last few years.

[26] "Report #3 Norfolk and Retailers Trust written by Forrester, Scott, Bowers, Cooper, Walls, Jan. 14 1974, R 1613 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[27] Department memo from Ian F. Rogers to Hon R.J. Romanow Re Saskatoon Environmental Society, January 29, 1975, R 1613 File 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[28] Department Memo from T.A. Harper Dept. of Tourism and Renewable Resources to Mr. Ian Rogers, Deputy Minister Department of Government Services Re Norfolk Trust Building City of Saskatoon, March 5 1975, R 1613 File 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

the Special Committee for the Identification and Listing of Historic Buildings wryly observed: "I am sure it can be argued that the architectural merits of the old building outweigh those of the new."[29] In the wake of this controversy, the Saskatoon Heritage Society was formed in 1976, dedicated to the preservation of Saskatoon architecture, sites and neighbourhoods "of historical and aesthetic value." As a memorial to the Norfolk Trust Building, Don Kerr, Saskatoon Heritage Society member, writer, and University of Saskatoon professor, subsequently published two poems, "Standard Trusts" and "Standard Trusts Revisited," lamenting the destruction of the building and its replacement with a modernist edifice.[30] Today, on the corner where it was located, mounted on a column in the shadow of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, is a commemoration of the Standard Trusts Building (Norfolk Trust) comprised of a picture accompanied by a brief descriptive essay from Canadian Heritage. Some of the aesthetic decisions regarding the Sturdy-Stone Centre were taken in the light of the controversy surrounding the Norfolk Trust Building, and as such its ghost could be understood as living on in the ceramic relief murals incorporated into the building.

The three initial designs submitted by the architects show no exterior murals were considered at this early point in the process.[31] Upon viewing the architects' sketches, the Saskatoon City Council immediately expressed reservations, with one alderman comparing Walls' design to a military installation, inquiring where "they were going to put the machine guns?"[32] This bold design was not unanimously appreciated and encountered official opposition. Discussions between a special committee of the Saskatoon City Council and the Department of Government Services were initiated in 1975, and that summer the council's objections regarding aesthetic problems with the end walls of the building were clearly articulated. The councillors felt these required some "softening" and that a lack of "human scale" needed to be restored. The most vocal critic according to the government minutes of the meeting was Alderman George Taylor, a well-known left-leaning NDP member who had challenged Allan Blakeney for the

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[29] Letter from C. Holliday-Scott to The Honourable John Brockelbank Minister of Government Services, June 9 1975, R 1613 File 3.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[30] Don Kerr, "Standard Trusts" in *A New Improved Sky,* (Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan: Coteau Books, 1981), 51; Don Kerr, "Standard Trusts Revisited," in *In the City of Our Fathers,* (Regina: Coteau Books, 1992), 23.
[31] Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, and Jacqueline Hucker, eds. *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles,* (Peterborough, On: Broadview Press, 2004), 212-15; "Provincial Office Building Saskatoon Saskatchewan Forrester, Scott, Bowers, Cooper, Walls Partners Ltd," R1613 File 3.7, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[32] Saskatoon Alderman George Taylor quoted in "City wants govt talks on building," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, nd, R 1613 File 3.5, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

leadership of the party in 1969.[33] His objections were certainly taken seriously. One much-discussed proposal was to hold a sculpture competition to solve the problem of the building's end walls. The government and the architects finally agreed to address these concerns by investigating "a modification to the ends of the building (without structural change) which will provide some level of relief to these end walls."[34] This was the first mention of the inclusion of art in this twenty million dollar project.

The Saskatchewan craft community quickly became aware of this project and saw in it potential for its members to become involved in a significant architectural project. It was seen as important enough to be mentioned during the founding meeting of the SCC in October 1975, where it became obvious conversations about the integration of art and craft into architecture were taking place among professionals from both camps. A Saskatchewan craftsperson observed that an unnamed architect "revealed that the mind of clients is changing and small buildings are budgeting for art works even if budgets are tight…People such as this architect could use us as contact people for supplying information to members on commissions available."[35] Philip Scott explained that the architects had first thought Québec artist Jordi Bonet's mural work might provide the relief required for the end walls because they had already encountered his murals in Toronto.[36] However, before this process was well underway, James Ellemers of the SAB lobbied the government for the use of local artists.[37] While the procedures for the participation of local artists were set in motion for the two exterior end walls, the lobby, and the first and second floor elevators in 1976, there were fears regarding the artists' abilities to deal with the required submission processes. Concern arose within the government that the "tendering requirements [might be] viewed as being too complicated and risky & thus discourage participation."[38] Because this was the only government concern, it appears that Government Services saw

[33] Jen Pederson, revised and edited by Jeff O'Brien, "A Seat on Council: The Aldermen, Councillors and Mayors of Saskatoon, 1903-2006," Saskatoon: City of Saskatoon Archives and the Office of the City Clerk, 2012, 164.
[34] Project #GS D122: Minutes of Meeting Held August 1, 1975 in Room 218, Legislative Building between representatives of Department of Government Services, their Consultants and special Committee of Saskatoon City Hall," R 1613 File 3.6, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[35] "Saskatchewan Craft Council Founding Meeting –Oct 4 and 5 1975," Book 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[36] Scott, 21 Sept. 2011. Scott specifically mentioned Bonet's mural at 2 Bloor St. W, a mural that was in fact wood and cement.
[37] James Ellemers telephone interview by the author 21 April, 2008.
[38] To Wilson P From D Re: Artwork, POB Saskatoon," R 1613 File 3.2, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

bureaucratic procedures as more of an impediment to the artists' participation than technique, organization or aesthetics might be. However, midway through the mural project in October 1977 a two-day meeting was called to bring together the key players for the mural program, where "artists, architects, and appropriate individuals from the Department of Government Services, Saskatchewan Arts Board and the masonry experts" finally met to confirm plans and resolve any remaining problems.[39] At this point it became clear there actually were technical problems with the exterior mural tiles. One of them involving the east mural was relatively minor and addressed through an extra few more weeks of work; while for the west mural major modifications were required that required months of additional labour and expense.[40]

Figure 20: Redesigned Sturdy-Stone west façade with a relief mural added, Roger Walls architect, 1975

Architectural Environment

Although all the buildings designed by Forrester, Scott, Bowers, Cooper and Walls are clearly in the modernist style, the Sturdy-Stone Centre was the only one to have an extensive decorative program. The ten-story main building is based on a rectangular footprint oriented on

[39] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly*, 3, Box 5 2005-53 S/16 Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina Archives Special Collections.
[40] The precise nature of these problems and their solutions are discussed in Chapters Four and Five, where each of these projects is elaborated.

an east-west axis, with converging vertical lines suggesting a wedge, which are redirected to the vertical at the top to finish in a narrow rectangle on the faces and sides. On the ends, the exterior murals extend from above the first-floor entrances to the seventh-floor parkade. While the Sturdy-Stone is located in downtown Saskatoon among the many high-rise towers, its striking iconic pyramid structure is only rivalled in design by the equally prominent ten-story 1932 Bessborough Hotel designed in the CPR Railway Hotel style. This was the most commanding structure in downtown Saskatoon until the mid-century building boom. This landmark has been described as the "most memorable feature of the townscape," that for many years was "higher than any building in the Commercial Business District and unique in having been designed to impress."[41] Faced in Tyndall stone and brick, this Canadian railway hotel marked the hopeful years of the opening of the Prairies to tourism and business, much as the Sturdy-Stone Centre, constructed forty years later and a few blocks away, stands out with its unique form as a NDP government landmark. For some it represents business and political acumen, and for others labour strife and failed agricultural policies, all experienced during the realization of Allan Blakeney's NDP social democratic platform.[42]

Figure 21: Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, c 1935
Brick and Tyndall stone facing

[41] Delainey and Sargeant, 12.
[42] Jocelyn Praud and Sarah McQuarrie, "The Saskatchewan CCF-NDP from the Regina Manifesto to the Romanow Years," in *Saskatchewan Politics Into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Howard A. Leeson, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2001), 151-53 and 161-62.

The two architects involved in this project were Roger Walls, as designer and Philip Scott as supervising architect. Scott handled the day-to-day management overseeing thirty different contracts and contractors and was thus intimately involved with processes, people and materials. The contractors, with very few exceptions, were all locally based in Saskatchewan and, as Scott pointed out, this approach was important to the government who promoted the use of Saskatchewan products and services.[43] Included in Scott's evaluation of "local" was the building facing of Tyndall stone chosen by the architects, a Prairie limestone mined in Manitoba, but part of a geological formation that extends into Saskatchewan.[44] Tyndall stone and Saskatchewan brick are the most common facing materials for public buildings in Saskatoon and Regina and, in fact, most government buildings are faced with Tyndall Stone in both cities, including those in the modernist style built under the Blakeney administration.[45]

Tyndall stone was the common facing of the Blakeney government's new buildings, and seen too on the T.C. Douglas Building in Regina built concurrently with the Sturdy-Stone. Both these buildings continued the lineage of Tyndall stone use on prominent provincial government buildings such as the 1912 Saskatchewan Legislative Building designed by Edward and W. S. Maxwell of Montreal.[46] In the first half of the twentieth-century, various Saskatchewan provincial governments had often turned to the combination of Tyndall stone and clay products in spaces that consolidated the authority of the provincial government. In Saskatoon, one of these now a designated heritage building, was the Beaux Arts/Neo-Classical 1909 Land Titles Office.[47] Other government buildings including the ten provincial courthouses, designed and built between 1919 and 1930 by government architect and engineer, Maurice Sharon, combined brick and Tyndall stone. These comprise designated heritage sites such as the Beaux-Arts Yorkton Court House, 1919, and the colonial revival courthouses in Weyburn, 1928, Estevan 1929 and

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[43] Scott, 21 Sept. 2011; Letter from Office of the Cabinet to Hon G. Snyder and Hon. N. Vickars, June. 1 1979, R 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[44] Scott, 21 Sept. 2011. For a description of Tyndall stone in Saskatchewan see A.C. Kendall, "Origin of Dolomite Mottling in Ordovician Limestones from Saskatchewan and Manitoba," *Bulletin of Canadian Petroleum Geology* 25, no.3 (June 1977): 480-504; A.D. McCraken, E. Macey, J.M. Monro Gray, and G.S. Nowlan, "Tyndall Stone," *GAC/AGC: Popular GeoScience* , 2007, www.gac.ca/PopularGeoscience.

[45] Tyndall stone appears on the Saskatchewan Legislature Building, as well as on the Mackenzie Art Gallery and the T.C. Douglas Building.

[46] Lewis H. Thomas, "The Saskatchewan Legislative Building and its Predecessors," *Journal RAIC,* 32 No. 7 (July 1955): 251-52.

[47] "Land Titles Office," City of Saskatoon; Heritage Properties, http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/PlanningDevelopment/DevelopmentReview/HeritageConservation/HeritageProperties/Pages/LandTitlesOffice.aspx

Assiniboa, 1930.[48] Even the commercial Standard Trusts Building, demolished to allow the construction of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, combined Tyndall stone and red brick where the bottom and top floors were faced with white Tyndall stone, with the remaining middle floors in red brick.[49] Tyndall stone served as an accent material on all these examples, but this was reversed in the Sturdy-Stone Centre and Regina's T.C. Douglas Building, where Tyndall stone played the prominent role. Importantly, when viewing the west face of the Sturdy-Stone Centre the combination of the white Tyndall stone and red terra cotta mural by Jack Sures matches the same red clay and white stone combination of the demolished Standard Trusts Building. The Sturdy-Stone murals, then, can be understood as an extension of this historic combination of Tyndall stone and clay, although originating from a very different use of clay, one based in the arts within the studio pottery movement. In order to accommodate the murals for the Sturdy-Stone, which were proposed after Wall's design had been accepted, a portion of the Tyndall stone had to be deleted from the plans.[50] On the west face of the building, its main entrance, the combination of red ceramics and Tyndall Stone created a visual familiarity for Saskatoon residents.

Figure 22: T.C. Douglas Building, Regina Saskatchewan, 1983, Ross Johnstone architect, commissioned by the Blakeney Government

[48] "Saskatchewan Register of Heritage Properties, Yorkton Court House," "Weyburn Court House," "Estevan Court House," Assinoboia Court House," Government of Saskatchewan: Parks, Culture and Sport: Saskatchewan Register of Heritage Properties, http://www.pcs.gov.sk.ca/heritage-property-search.

[49] Exterior Shot of Standard Trusts Building, Permanent Link LH-4682. Local History Room, Saskatoon Public Library, http://spldatabase.saskatoonlibrary.ca/ics-wpd/exec/icswppro.dll?AC=QBE_QUERY&TN=LHR_RAD&NP=4&QB0=AND&QF0=CLASSIFICATION&QI0=STANDARD+TRUSTS&QB1=OR&QF1=SUBJECT&QI1=STANDARD+TRUSTS+BUILDING&MR=20&RF=www_Canned%20Searches&QB2=AND&QF2=THUMBNAIL_IMAGE&QI2=*, accessed 15 Aug. 2012.

[50] Philip Scott email to the author, 18 Sept. 2011.

The juxtaposition of Tyndall stone and ceramic tiles on a building named the Sturdy-Stone Centre emphasizes not only physical stability and endurance, but also social and political stability and ideological survival. The Sturdy-Stone Centre name was decided upon only in March 1979 when the project neared completion. As the opening date had to be confirmed and press releases were contemplated, government bureaucrats put pressure on the cabinet to decide upon an appropriate name. In January 1979 lists of names of historic and recently deceased Saskatchewan figures, already deemed worthy to have prominent buildings named after them, was presented to the Saskatoon cabinet members to consider.[51] Six weeks later it was noted the Saskatoon M.L.A.'s could not reach a decision. Government Services finally suggested to the premier and cabinet that the building be named after former Saskatoon CCF M.L.A. J.H. Brockelbank,[52] whose son was then Speaker of the Legislature. The cabinet rejected this suggestion and settled on naming of the building the Sturdy-Stone Centre.[53] The opening was scheduled for the end of July 1979 upon the completion of the mounting of all the murals.

The "percent" Program

The successful termination of the first stage of the Sturdy-Stone mural project was seen to be a significant development in the culture of Saskatchewan. Along with a growing number of art galleries and commercial galleries, the local newspaper remarked the public murals were indicative of "a growing sophistication and self-confidence within our society…The significance of [the commissioning of public art] is that it represents a commitment on behalf of government, and some private corporations, to the idea that art should be a permanent part of our everyday environment."[54] After all the murals were finally mounted in 1983, the SCC's magazine published an article explaining that, at a time when "one percent" or "one and a half percent" programs were common formulae in North America used to integrate art and architecture, the

[51] Letter from Gordon Snyder to Honourable Wes Robbins, Honourable Roy Romanow, Honourable Herman Rolfes, Saskatoon P.O.B. –Name, Jan. 4, 1979, R 1613 File 3.8, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[52] Department Memo From Gordon T. Snyder to Premier Allan Blakeney and all Cabinet Ministers Re Naming of Saskatoon Provincial Office Building, Feb. 15 1979, R 1613 File 3.2, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[53] Memorandum from Gordon T. Snyder to Dennis Foley re Provincial Office Building, Saskatoon, March 22, 1979, R 1613 File 3.2, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[54] Paul Fudge, "Art seen as permanent part of everyday environment," *Leader-Post,* Saturday, (Dec. 13 1980), np. Victor Cicansky archives, 2005-S3 Box 6/16 Newspaper Articles etc., University of Regina Archives Special Collections.

Saskatoon government under Blakeney had adopted a "two percent" formula specifically for the exterior and interior decorative program of the Sturdy-Stone Building.[55] More recently this claim of a two percent figure was repeated in Gail Crawford's *Studio Ceramics in Canada.*[56] This generous "two percent" is not supported, however, by documentation, and, in fact, the provincial government had an ad hoc approach regarding the integration of the arts in its new and renovated buildings. Such an approach was similar to the federal government's policy before the adoption of its formal "one percent" program in 1964 that terminated in 1978.[57] Provincial government documentation indicates its inconsistent approach in this matter resulted in various government agencies asking for clarification. The mid to late 1970s was a period when government policy regarding the status of the Saskatchewan Government as a visual arts patron was evolving.

The first mention of a budget for the arts in the Sturdy-Stone project appeared after the provincial government agreed to modify the ends of the building with some form of relief based on the complaints of the Saskatoon City Counsillors on 1 August 1975. In early September "one percent" towards the arts appears in the Provincial Office Building project cost summary, calculated at $157, 733, an amount derived from the cost of the basic building construction without any finishing and furnishings,[58] indicating a strategy to keep the cost of art to a minimum. By June the following year the projected artwork budget had been increased to $273, 669, based on an estimated two million dollar overall building cost.[59] This figure approaches the approximate total amount spent on all the Sturdy-Stone murals between 1977 and 1983. However, if the cost of installation by Masonry Contractors, who charged the government for time and materials,[60] is added to this sum, then perhaps a two percent figure may be considered accurate. Two percent, however, did not end up in the collective hands of the mural makers.

During this period several requests were made to the government for clarification of their "percent" program regarding arts and architecture. Some of these came from within the

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[55] Peggy Forde, "Sturdy-Stone murals: Abstract to Concrete," *Craft Factor,* 8 No.3 (Summer 1983): 3; Scott, 21 Sept. 2011.
[56] Gail Crawford, *Studio Ceramics in Canada 1920-2005,* (Fredericton New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions and Toronto: Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, 2005), 192.
[57] Catherine Anderson-Dolcini, "One-Percent for Whom? Canada's Public Works Fine Art Program 1964-1978: Its Rise and Demise" (Master's Thesis, Carleton University, 2000), 1.
[58] Saskatchewan Department of Government Services Project Cost Summary Provincial Office Building Saskatoon Saskatchewan, Sept. 5 1975, R 1613 File 3.9, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[59] "Provincial Office Building - Saskatoon, Project Estimate/Cost Comparison, June 15, 1976," R 1613 File 3.9, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[60] Jake Ketler, interview by the author, Saskatoon, 26 May 2011.

government and others from outside. In 1976 the designation of funds for ceramic art for the Sturdy-Stone Centre coupled with the reorganization of the government's art purchasing policies spurred discussion among the departments. Early that year the Department of Government Services, in charge of buildings, along with the Department of Culture and Youth, who dealt with matters concerning art, jointly sent a request to the province's Treasury Board. They sought:

> approval for the Department of Government Services to provide permanent fine artwork in conjunction with all new public buildings…at a cost of approximately 1% of the total project cost. The procedures for implementation will be worked out jointly between the Department of Government Services and the Department of Culture and Youth.[61]

In this request they pointed out that other provinces and the Federal Government had clear policies "providing from 1% to 3% of the total project cost for artwork in public buildings," and the Saskatchewan government already had a policy in place "where $10,000 per year is provided in the budget of Government Services for the purchase of art for the offices of Ministers and senior government officials." Furthermore they defined artwork as "murals, sculptures, tapestries, paintings, pottery, fountains, etc. that are designed with artistic intent." In lieu of a new and clear "one percent" policy they noted the alternatives were to "[c]ontinue with the present and ad hoc method of providing artwork in conjunction with public buildings [, p]rovide artwork in conjunction with the renovation of existing buildings as well as new buildings [, or] provide artwork to a different percentage level, say 1% or 2% of the total project cost." [62] The Treasury Board refused this request due to budgetary constraints, but also pointed out that art for the provincial buildings could be coordinated with the Federal Art Bank, and the SAB, and emphasized the specific amount of "one percent" had not been justified.[63] A year and a half later, Government Services again pointed out the ad hoc nature of the art program for the Provincial Office Building. They explained the mural project was the result only of complaints regarding the aesthetics of the building from City Council and the program was a specific response to this in order "to soften the impression of the building on the surrounding environment of Saskatoon." They noted too a committee formed by James (Jim) Ellemers of the SAB and the architects

[61] Department Memo from D.E. Foley and J. Benning to G.H. Beatty re Provision of Artwork in Conjunction with Public Buildings, January 22, 1976, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[62] Department Memo from D.E. Foley and J. Benning to G.H. Beatty re Provision of Artwork in Conjunction with Public Buildings, January 22, 1976, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[63] Department Memo from G.H. Beatty to Mr. D.E. Foley and Mr. D. Moroz re Provision of Artwork in Conjunction with Public Buildings, May 5, 1976," R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

judged the submissions, which were finally approved by the Deputy Minister, implying this was not a purely government matter, and the decoration of the building should not be regarded as a guiding principle.[64] Six months later a new attempt was made to formulate a policy, which apparently also did not succeed.[65] This lack of clarity in the government public art strategy was particularly evident to the public because of the Sturdy-Stone mural project and prompted several inquiries and pointed reminders about the necessity of a coherent approach. In 1977 these came from the SCC, SAB, and a private citizen, who were all assured about the ten thousand dollar allocation for purchase of art for executive offices, without actually addressing the percentage issue. [66] Despite this confusion, because of the mention of "one percent" in the 1975 Provincial Office Building cost estimate, it was subsequently assumed even by succeeding governments this was an established policy initiated by Blakeney's NDP government.[67]

This vacillation was similar to what had been encountered at the federal level a decade earlier. Regarding the national case, Catherine Anderson-Dolcini pointed out that without a formalized formula to allocate funds for art in public buildings, the system "operated in an ad hoc manner, allowing the Chief Architect of Public Works to submit a request to the Treasury Board, expressing the reasons why a particular building of national significance required a work of art."[68] Because such requests were made only after the building contracts had been awarded, the actual integration of art and architecture was seen to be compromised.[69] The federal government adopted six parameters for their "one percent" program: "Fine Art" meant "elements of building design including murals, sculptures, ornamental surface treatments, mosaics, frescoes, tapestries, paintings, fountains, special lighting installations, etc. which are conceived and executed by professional artists;" artists deemed to be eligible had to be "Canadian residents, with some training from a recognized school of art or be capable of showing examples of art

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[64] To Myrna Knight from W.C. Phillips, re Artworks in Government Buildings, Oct. 31 1977, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[65] Department Memo from Ned Shillington to Dennis Foley Re Artwork in Government Buildings, May 5, 1978, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[66] Letter from Barry Lipton to Hon. Ned Shillington Aug. 31, 1977, R 1053 File 102, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Department Memo from Bruce Lawson to Myrna Knight re Artworks in Government building August 23, 1977; Department Memo from Ned Shillington to Dennis Foley re Hans Harold, August 9, 1977, R 1053 File 102, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[67] "Interoffice memorandum, To Alan H. Moffat from Bruce Murray, Subject: Art Work, Mon. 7 Oct. 1985," R 1615 File 2.4, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[68] Anderson-Dolcini, 18.
[69] National Archives of Canada, Public Works Canada, Fine Art Advisory committee, RG ,Vol. 4428, File 26, "Minutes of Meeting (October 2-3,1968):4 quoted in Anderson-Dolcini, 18-19.

work of suitable character for the project;" the consulting architects, acting as project coordinators would ensure the appropriate integration of art and architecture through a collaborative relationship with the artist; a committee from the National Gallery was responsible for the final approval of the artists and their work; one-percent of the cost was to be set aside for the art work commissions; and no project was to be restricted regarding size and location of the town.[70] The criteria and procedures adopted by the federal government were thus similar in many respects to the Saskatchewan government's approach in the Sturdy-Stone Centre's decorative program.

Commissioning the Murals

As mentioned, Sturdy-Stone architects Roger Walls and Phillip Scott had originally considered decorating the east and west façades of the Sturdy-Stone Centre with ceramic murals by Québec artist Jordi Bonet, who was experienced in integrating the allied arts with architecture. By the early 1970s, Bonet already had filled several major mural commissions in Toronto including: *Human Goodness and Evil,* (ceramic, Entrance Hall North American Tower, 1965-66); *The End of Time,* (ceramic, MacDonald Building Queen's Park, 1966); *The Entrance* (cement and wood, 2 Bloor St. West, 1973-4).[71] Walls consequently opened preliminary negotiations with Bonet to produce panels for the Sturdy Stone Building. Apparently neither architect was aware of the seven Bonet murals that had already been installed in Saskatoon in 1967 on the Physics Building of the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, despite Walls having designed the University of Saskatchewan's Education Building that opened in 1970.[72] Negotiations between Walls and Bonet were terminated when the SAB intervened, lobbying for the work of Saskatchewan artists. As Bonet's abstract surrealist murals were the first considered for this project, this choice pointed to the architects' stylistic preference.

[70] George Rolfe, personal files, DPW, "Proposed Fine Art Policy," Nov. 1969, 1-4 quoted in Anderson-Dolcini, 19-20.
[71] Jacques de Roussan, *Jordi Bonet*, trans. Jane Moore (LaPrairie QC: Marcel Broquet, 1986), 102,106.
[72] "News from the University of Saskatchewan, 1967," Bonet File, 74-368, Physics Building Archives, University of Saskatchewan.

Figure 23: Three of Jordi Bonet's murals for the exterior of the Physics Building, University of Saskatchewan, 1969

Gordon Snyder, the new Minister of Government Services along with his new deputy minister, Dennis Foley, supported this local initiative: they made the "momentous decision" to "employ Saskatchewan artists for the exterior and interior art." Although there was "no official government policy" and with a lack of "encouragement … to go further," Foley was hopeful to incorporate subsequent artwork into the Sturdy-Stone building. Foley, however, did acknowledge his nervousness about the decision to entrust the decoration to Saskatchewan artists, reporting: "I've always had butterflies in my stomach about that decision."[73] Through the concern and intervention of Ellemers and support from Foley, the idea was put forward that "only Saskatchewan artists be used and that murals also be commissioned for inside the building."[74] This request for Saskatchewan artists was consistent with the suggestions put forward at the founding conference of the SCC in October 1975, and with the government's wish to use Saskatchewan suppliers for the building. The government and the SAB were ultimately convinced Saskatchewan ceramicists should be given an opportunity to develop such skills, and would be better placed to represent the community in the new Provincial Office Building.[75]

[73] Caroline Heath, "Saskatchewan Artists for Sturdy Stone," *Saskatchewan Arts Board* 2, no. 3 (Winter 1980): 6
[74] Forde, 3.
[75] James Ellemers, 21 April 2008.

Ellemers, acting as agent for the government and employed by the SAB, quickly approached fifteen Saskatchewan artists to submit for the first five designated spaces.[76] A committee composed of representatives of the SAB, including Ellemers, the architects, Philip Scott and Roger Walls, and the Department of Government Services, under Reg Gross, reviewed the mural submissions.[77] The SCC magazine, *The Craft Factor,* reported the winning murals were chosen based upon the "concept of each proposal, the quality of the submissions and the suitability of the designs in relation to the building."[78] Ellemers was the pivotal figure moving among the SAB, the architects, the government, and the artists. A 1984 British publication addressing the complex relations involved in creating public art noted that the "institution's first task is not to choose the art but the person or persons who are going to do the choosing…whoever does the choosing must know a lot about current painting and sculpture and has to avoid not only the fashions but the vested interests of the art world."[79] Ellemers had certainly accumulated knowledge about painting and sculpture through his teaching roles in Painting and Drawing in the University of Saskatchewan's Extension program at the Regina Campus, and his later work as Director of the School of the Arts administered by the SAB.[80] By the time the architectural drawings were released to the ceramicists who were ultimately engaged, the spaces for the exterior mural decoration were designated for a "mosaic tile panel."[81] About two years elapsed between the signing of the contracts with the Sturdy-Stone muralists for the monumental works and the Sturdy-Stone's formal opening in July 1979.

While the architectural drawings called the decorative program "mosaic tile," the exterior murals were all executed in sculptural relief. This designation was not surprising; mosaics had formed a significant part of exterior decorative art in Canada, particularly in the 1950s, to which numerous articles in the *RAIC Journal* attest.[82] Notable Canadian mosaics were produced by

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[76] Ellemers, 21 April 2008..
[77] Ibid; Scott, 21 Sept. 2011; Forde, 3.
[78] Forde, 3.
[79] Peter Dormer, "Embellishment with the Public Purse: the responsibilities of the public servant, in *Art Within Reach: Artists and Craftworkers, architects and patrons in the making of public art,* ed. Peter Townsend, (Thames and Hudson, published by "Art Monthly" in collaboration with the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Crafts Council., 1984), 42.
[80] Jack Sures email to the author 19 July 2011; Peter Sametz, Associate Executive Director, SAB, email to the author, 9 Aug. 2010.
[81] "Measurements," Box 6 File 49: Commissions. Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building. Diagrams. Approx. 1977, 99-38 Jack Sures Fonds, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[82] Since antiquity mosaics have been historically associated with architectural decoration. Common mosaic wall materials are marbles, semiprecious stone, pebbles, glass and ceramics, shaped in regular cubes or irregular forms

B.C. Binning, André Biéler, André Garant, and George Swinton.[83] Mosaics, however, are usually one step removed from the actual manipulation of clay by the ceramicist and the components are generally purchased from outlets that have imported already fabricated ceramics and glass and stone in specific shapes and colours. Often a mosaic will be composed of a mixture of different materials that employ specific textures, including matt and reflective surfaces appropriate for the composition. When Binning created his Vancouver CIBC project he deviated from the norm of using available mosaic pieces in Canada, choosing to work in Italy with the suppliers in order to have the pieces cut to the appropriate size for the scale of his mural.[84] However, he did not control the kind of clay, glazes, or the surface patterns of each piece. Mosaic works in these instances emerged from painterly practices where an image originating as a painting is transposed into a very different material composed of small coloured and textured tiles. The mosaic designation by Walls indicates either a familiarity with this kind of decoration rather than with the three-dimensional works that were emerging from studio ceramic practice at that time, or the lack of a word to describe the particular three-dimensional clay work that he envisioned. A 1980 SAB report on the murals after the official inauguration of the building also referred to them as mosaics, suggesting again a lack of appropriate nomenclature.[85]

This unfamiliarity with terminology is perhaps indicative of alienation among architects, artists and craftspeople that Anita Aarons had so lamented and worked to repair through her publications. These included her two volume *Allied Arts Catalogue*, her monthly Allied Arts columns in the Journal of the Royal Architects Institute of Canada during the mid to later 1960s and her article in *Craftsman/L'Artisan*, published by the Canadian Craft Council.[86] Literature on

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embedded in a cement base. Steffi Röttgen, "The Roman Mosaic from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century: *A Short Historical Survey,*" in *The Art of Mosaics: Selections from the Gilbert Collection,* eds. Steffi Röttgen and Alavar Gonzalez-Palacios, trans. Alla Thompon Hall, (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1982), 19.

[83] There are several mosaics in Vancouver, B.C. by B.C. Binning: Radio CKWX Studios, British Columbia Electric Company 1956, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, 1957. Other important works were executed by André Biéler in Kingston Ontario, *The Architect and the Mosaicist* for the Frontenac Floor and Tile Company and *The Symbols* for Chalmers United Church Hall. André Garant created *Saint Dominique vendant ses livres pour nourir les pauvres,* La Maison Montmorency, Courville, Québec, and George Swinton completed an abstract mosaic for the Recreational Hall, Winnipeg, Manitoba. B.C. Binning, "Mosaics: Vancouver to Venice and Return." *Canadian Art* 15, no.4 (Nov. 1958): 252-57.

[84] Binning, 253.

[85] Heath, 6.

[86] Anita Aarons, ed. *Allied Arts Catalogue,* vol.1, (Toronto: RAIC, 1966); Anita Aarons, ed. *Allied Arts Catalogue*, vol.2, (Toronto: RAIC, 1968). See also Anita Aarons, "Public Art, We…The Inheritors, 1968-2068," *Architecture Canada* 45, no.9 (Sept. 1968): 29-31; Anita Aarons, "Queen's Park: A Pictorial Survey, *Architecture Canada* 46, no.3 (March 1969):15-16; Anita Aarons, *Art for Architecture: The Wall,* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1969); Anita Aarons, "How to Commission a Work of Art," *Craftsman: L'Artisan* 3, no.1 (1970): 12-13, 20.

public art commissions unequivocally supported the view that a successful and efficient integration of art within architectural projects depended upon a close and timely working relationship between artist and architect. Even before Aarons' implication in the discussion in the mid-1960s, the Québec architectural journal, *Architecture, Bâtiment, Construction* repeatedly published articles and examples of such collaborations throughout the 1950s and into the1960s. Such concerns were not unique to Canada. In 1983, an edited volume was published on the subject in Great Britain, which also advised that the artist be approached early in the project and develop a working relationship with the architect. The publication cited some prejudices about the ability of craftspeople to handle large scale public works explaining architects and clients "question craftspeople's professionalism, saying they can't cost work efficiently, can't work to a brief, can't draw clear and detailed drawings, can't handle complicated and large contracts, can't collaborate well with the varying groups of people inevitably involved on public projects and can't meet deadlines."[87] That Aarons, who had studied in England, was aware of these same concerns is indicated by the themes of her articles. Her RAIC columns instructed clients, architects and artists/craftspersons in procedures that would facilitate the integration process, suggesting early consultation, firm contracts, and adequate time for the artist to complete the project.[88] Aarons made a key observation regarding the integration of the arts and architecture through government sponsorship a decade prior to the Sturdy-Stone murals. She pointed out:

> The works which will result will form 'living galleries' and should provide exciting and thought-provoking experiences. This can be the only valid reason for the acquisition of such works. The 'dead' museums have acquired enough safe and proven pieces to surfeit public appetite for the next thousand years.[89]

One of Ellemer's challenges as agent was to assure the government and the architects that the Saskatchewan artists he proposed for the project would and could act professionally in a domain in which they had little or no experience. The client's specific choice of clay as the decorative material for the exterior and interior was a decision necessarily guided by Ellemers who was familiar with the professional Saskatchewan art worlds. The significance of this material choice lies in its references to the province's geography and geology, and its settlement

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87 Martina Margetts, "Rediscovering the Craftworker: the role of craft in architecture," in Townsend,
88 Anita Aarons, "Art and Architecture: Time Factors in Commissioned Work," *Journal RAIC-L'IRAC* 42, no.3 (March 1965): 22.
89 Anita Aarons, "Anniversary Hindcast and Forecast," *Architecture Canada* 43, no.3 (March 1966): 16.

history, including its industrial base, early-mid twentieth-century architecture, and the success of its studio ceramics movement. Relief work, rather than painting on industrially produced tiles, or using already glazed tiles as mosaic, unequivocally signals a mural individually made by a ceramic artist interacting with the raw clay, leaving an authorial trace at *all* stages of the process. It implies skill, compositional expertise, and knowledge of the exigencies of working with large-scale projects. Even when technology is involved to achieve the results, it is clearly adapted for creative use, if not actually designed by the ceramicist, and is connected to an intimate understanding of materials, gestures, technologies and history. Relief murals make a statement about the professionalism of studio ceramicists.

For the second round of the murals, a joint call for proposals for artworks was issued for spaces above the Sturdy-Stone Centre's eighth, ninth and tenth floor elevators, as well as various spaces in the newly completed T.C. Douglas Building in Regina. Artists who were considering a submission were encouraged to physically visit the sites.[90] From one hundred letters sent out by the SAB, eighteen people responded with initial proposals for the T.C. Douglas Building and five for the Sturdy-Stone Centre.[91] Such a noteworthy number of responses suggest Saskatchewan artists were excited by the possibility of producing significant public art and felt confident enough to do so. However the limited submissions from ceramicists for the Sturdy-Stone project and subsequent letters to Government Services from professional ceramicists suggest the call was ill timed for some already committed to other projects.[92] The open call procedure was adopted as an alternative to the closed one used in the first round of mural submissions for the Sturdy-Stone project. Although only two of the five submissions were finally selected for the ninth and tenth floors elevators, a third was subsequently selected for the space above the eighth floor elevators from proposals for the T.C. Douglas Building.[93] As Blakeney's NDP government lost the 1982 election, this was the last public art project it spearheaded.

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[90] Letter from Jim Ellemers to D. Foley, re Competition for Art Works T.C. Douglas Building and Sturdy Stone Centre, 28 March 1980, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[91] Letter from P.E. Brown to D.E. Foley re Artwork Competition, 31 Oct. 1980, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; letter from Ellemers to D. Foley, 28 March 1980.
[92] Letter from Lorraine Malach to Pat Brown, 28 July 1980, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Letter from Mel Bolen to Dear Sirs, 10 Aug. 1980, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[93] Handwritten notes in "This is a Competition for Artworks," from P.E. Brown to D.E. Foley re Artwork Competition, 31 Oct. 1980, R 1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

Critical Reception

Despite the Sturdy-Stone's symbolic weight, its architectural boldness, and its exciting ceramic decoration, it was not well received in architectural circles. Influential western Canadian architecture critic and scholar Trevor Boddy disparagingly described the Sturdy-Stone Centre in *Canadian Architect* as "an overbearing concrete presence…looking like a clumsy amalgamation of the Boston City Hall and the University of Lethbridge [that] bodes ill for the province's architectural future."[94] Prairie architecture was earnestly discussed in *Architecture Canada* and *Canadian Architect*, but the focus of concern mainly directed to problems of urban development and Alberta buildings. Architecture in Saskatchewan was particularly left in a discursive backwater.[95] Canadian architectural theorist Peter Hemingway observed in 1983: "Saskatchewan is a most infertile soil for architectural innovation, lacking the wealth of Alberta and the cultural sophistication of Manitoba."[96] But he also added that some successful buildings by a small handful of architects were "the most powerfully original buildings in the post-war era [and] perhaps the only truly Canadian –as against adopted –architectural images that have been created on the prairies, out of this harsh necessity for strong forms in a landscape wide as Heaven or Hell."[97] This did not include the Sturdy-Stone Centre. Boddy's damning review, the only reference made of the Sturdy-Stone Centre in Canadian architectural magazines, effectively removed it from significant architectural discourse. Whereas designs by Saskatchewan architect Clifford Wiens gathered national critical accolades,[98] there was a noted lack of support for Walls' Sturdy-Stone design, surely a disappointment for both the architect and the client of this major government project, and, of course, the citizens of Saskatoon who were its primary users. The applied art program of this building was not even mentioned in terms of its architecture.

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[94] Trevor Boddy, "Prairie Architecture Examined: Boomtown Urban Design," *Canadian Architect* 24, no.10 (Oct. 1979): 39. Boddy, professor at University of British Columbia, critic, curator, and historian of architecture, is also an award-winning author who has written extensively on architecture and cities for a variety of newspapers, journals, and magazines, and who also works as a consultant in urban design.

[95] Notable exceptions to this are discussions of the architecture of Saskatchewan's Clifford Wiens and Douglas Cardinal.

[96] Peter Hemingway, "Prairie Architecture: An Introduction," in *Modern Canadian Architecture,* ed. Leon Whiteson, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1983), 69.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Significant buildings by Clifford Wiens, three time winner of the Massey medal for Architecture, include St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church 1959, John Nugent Studio 1960, Mennonite Brethren 1961, Our Lady Roman Catholic Church 1966, Silton Summer Chapel 1967, University of Regina Heating and Cooling Plant 1968 and Nakusp Hot Springs Spa 1974. Trevor Boddy, "Clifford Wiens (1926-)" Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 9 July 2012, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/wiens_clifford_1926-.html. For a description of Wiens architecture see Clifford Wiens, *Telling Details: the architecture of Clifford Wiens*, (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 2009).

Whether judged an architectural success or not, the building could be seen to attempt to address the problem of creating a modern, but indigenous Prairie architecture, a subject discussed in *The Canadian Architect.* At the time, it was suggested that "[t]he romantic image of a grain elevator silhouetted against a Prairie sky is a red herring for an indigenous Prairie architecture…"[99] However, the flat faces and the play of diagonals and verticals in the Sturdy-Stone Centre could be understood to allude to the ubiquitous grain elevator repeatedly summoned, discussed, and sometimes rejected,[100] a symbol of vernacular Saskatchewan architecture that might serve as template for the expression of a Prairie style.[101] In line with this, a review in *Arts West* drew attention to the Sturdy-Stone Centre's "imposing… silhouette against the skyline,"[102] echoing the vision of the vertical silhouette of the grain elevator in contrast to the dominating Prairie horizon. In fact the sloped walls of the Sturdy-Stone and its flat face recall two buildings renown for their "powerful silhouettes,"[103] and "strong forms" that have been assigned iconic value by Harold Kalman in his seminal book, *A History of Canadian Architecture* (Volume 2), and by Leon Whiteson in *Modern Canadian Architecture*: Wiens' 1967 Heating and Cooling Plant at the University of Regina and Étienne Gaboury's Royal Canadian Mint near Winnipeg Manitoba.[104] In his discussion of prairie poetry Jason Wiens uses the term "prairie cosmopolitanism" to describe an "internally differentiated cosmopolitan site," a place that inserts its regional specificity into a global context,[105] troubling any consensus of either regional or global. The architecture of the Sturdy-Stone Centre architecture does just this through both form and materials.

Two decades earlier, at the time of Saskatchewan's fiftieth anniversary as a province in 1955, such a need for regional identity in architecture was only embryonic. Many Saskatchewan

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[99] Arthur Muscovitch, "Prairie Architecture," *The Canadian Architect* 25, no.2 (Feb. 1980): 25.
[100] Ibid. See also Clifford Wiens, "Prairie Architecture Examined: Regionalism and Reality," *The Canadian Architect* 24, no.10 (Oct. 1979): 29.
[101] Gustavo da Roza, "Prairie Architecture Examined: Regionalism and Reality," *The Canadian Architect* 24, no.10 (Oct. 1979): 28; Wiens, 1979, 29: Peter Hemingway, "Prairie Architecture: An Introduction," in Whiteson, 1983, 22. See also Brian Allsop, "Prairie Architecture Examined: Post-Modern-The Image and the Challenge," *The Canadian Architect* 24, no.10 (Oct. 1979): 34, 36.
[102] Ruth Wright Miller, "Saskatoon," *Arts West* 4, no.6 (Sept/Oct.1979): 10.
[103] Leon Whiteson, "Modern Canadian Architecture: A General Introduction," in Whiteson, 1983, 15.
[104] Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture,* vol. 2, (Toronto, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 820, 821.
[105] Jason Wiens, "The Prairies as Cosmopolitan Space: Recent 'Prairie' Poetry," in *Toward Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture, History,* ed. Robert Wardhaugh and Gabrielle Roy, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001), 152-154, 161-162.

Euro-Canadian inhabitants were just one or two generations removed from building and living in sod huts, and had experienced at close hand a truly "regional architecture." Architects accepted the transplantation of architectural styles from "the old world" as an appropriate reflection of the youthfulness of the province in accord with its conservative social nature, a nature closely attuned to the environmental challenges of designing and constructing on the Prairies beset by extreme weather and difficult soil conditions. These conditions favoured the use of local brick in tried and true building designs, and this was a period when brick companies flourished.[106] Saskatchewan's clay deposits were substantial and the south Saskatchewan brickyards around Eastend, Estevan, and at Claybanks formed an important provincial industry throughout most of the twentieth century. Indeed, clay and clay products have been important to Saskatchewan both as a building material and an art medium. The MacKenzie Art Gallery's Timothy Long suggests: "The choice of all ceramic decoration [for the Sturdy-Stone Centre] by Saskatchewan artists is one of the strongest statements about the identification of clay with a particular region."[107] I suggest this refers not only to the Regina Clay Movement to which Long was referring, but also to the Saskatchewan building industry and the Saskatchewan studio pottery movement in general.

Conclusion

The significance of the Sturdy-Stone mural project becomes clearer by looking at different forms of material culture and material, but above all engaging with material as process and interconnections. The Provincial Office Building plans were approved by the Saskatoon City Council only because of the additions of the exterior relief murals; therefore the building and murals are co-constitutive. At the same time, in supporting both rounds of the mural commissions, the newly formed SCC increased its power base throughout its own craft constituency, and, in terms of long-term strategies, within the government through co-operation with the SAB. But the ceramic murals would not have come about without the instigation and

[106] K. Izumi, "Recent Architecture in Saskatchewan," *Journal RAIC-L'IRAC* 32, no.7 (July, 1955): 241-242. See also Radoslav Zuk, "Architecture for the Canadian Prairies: A Report on the MAA Conference held in February, 1963 at the School of Architecture, University of Manitoba, *Journal RAIC-L'IRAC* 40, no.5 (May 1963): 11, 13; W.G. Plewes, CBD-125. Cladding Problems Due to Frame Movements, National Research Canada, *Canadian Building Digest*, 1970.

[107] Timothy Long, "Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making*, ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2005), 37.

support of the SAB and the SCC. Through the commissions, the provincial government became publicly recognized as a patron of the arts, extending its administrative base into the arts community; within this context the murals increased pressure on the government to both clarify and legislate the provincial "percent" program for the integration of art and architecture. The technical and visual success of the first round of the murals assured the Government's 1980 call for submissions for art for the T.C. Douglas Building in Regina would proceed without opposition and encouraged numerous proposals. In this sense the government's involvement with the art and craft communities reached a new level of sophistication and was seen as more "professional." Technical achievements of the integration of the ceramic murals into the concrete edifice increased the profiles of the architectural firm and the masonry contractor. These co-shaping mechanisms involve many kinds of actors, not all human, enmeshing them all in networks of associations that merge into and emerge from the Sturdy-Stone Centre.

The decision to integrate a decorative program based on ceramics into the modernist Sturdy-Stone Centre could be understood as anachronistic, looking to a vernacular material in a nostalgic manner, in opposition to the new industrial materials that were emerging at the time. Being "modern" in terms of architecture was clearly defined with industrial advances. In 1952 American architecture critic, Henry H. Reed, Jr., pointed out to a Yale University audience: "We find ourselves left only with the materials (they must be "Modern"), construction (it must be the latest method), and machinery (the most recent invention). [108] Such an emphasis on modern materials, technology, and machinery implies its opposite, old-fashioned, out-of-date or anachronistic. In terms of modern craft materials and practices British craft theorist Tom Crook addresses these polarities:

> On the one hand, craft is conceived of as 'antimodern,' as opposed to, and critical of, industrial modernity. In this way, it is also seen as backward-looking, nostalgic and anachronistic. On the other hand, its very critical posture towards industrial modernity is taken as evidence of its modernity, of a forward-looking, transformative ethos which seeks to foster change, innovation and reform.[109]

[108] Henry H. Reed, Jr., "Monumental Architecture: Or the Art of Pleasing in Civic Design," *Perspecta* 1, (Summer 1952): 54.
[109] Tom Crook, "Craft and the Dialogics of Modernity: The Arts and Craft Movement in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England," *The Journal of Modern Craft,* 2 No. 1 (March 2009): 18.

He suggests we look instead at craft and craft materials dialogically where "modern craft" is part of an ongoing relationship with its "opposed processes, concepts, ideals, and words."[110] In this sense the ceramic murals and the modern building enter into an "ongoing dynamic of struggle and provocation."[111] These murals do critique the universal face of modern architecture in line with the concerns of the Saskatoon City Council, but by doing so they offer an "alternative modernity, forged within a multiplicity of dialogs between past, present and future."[112] The decision to incorporate the ceramic murals projected the building into the future by looking to the past to critique the present.

When the Sturdy-Stone Centre was named in 1979, not only was the hyphenation noteworthy, but so too was the specific choice of "Centre" rather than "Building." For Government Services "Centre" was considered significant as it conveyed the building was to perform functions above and beyond enclosure.[113] The next chapter will look at the materials that formed this enclosure allowing it to function as a "sturdy-stone centre," and how the "dialogics of modernity" are implicated in the material, material culture and culture of materials of this "Centre."

[110] Crook, 19.
[111] Ibid, 20.
[112] Ibid, 30.
[113] Memo to Dennis Floate, sent March 13/79, R. 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board. The memo specified "as a centre of government activities and offices, including …some crown corporation, govt. liquor, parkade & retail mall."

CHAPTER 3

MATERIAL MATTERS: CLAY AND CONCRETE

Introduction

The integration of ceramics as murals into the Sturdy-Stone Centre architecture was a considered decision and one sustained against pressure from the architects and other craftspeople. Despite suggestions from the architectural firm to include a weaving for a concrete lobby wall that would extend two floors, and a professionally prepared and detailed presentation to Government Services made by a team of experienced weavers, the ceramic theme was maintained over two commissioning processes five years apart.[1] Ceramics as a material for this project mattered. This chapter uses the concepts of material and the culture of material to address what matters about materials. I derive the expression "culture of material" from anthropologist Daniel Miller's assertion that "materiality" not only encompasses "artifacts" but also "the ephemeral, the imaginary, the biological, and the theoretical."[2] Architectural historian Adrian Forty also uses this approach applying it metaphysically to the history of concrete.[3] Specifically, The Oxford English Dictionary defines culture as "ideas, customs, social behaviour, products and way[s] of life … characterized by or associated with the specified quality or thing."[4] While Forty separates the material of concrete from culture, placing culture solely in the human realm, I bring them together acknowledging materials' own particular characteristics that determine their processes as they interact with and through human projects, and the human response to them, constituting their being in the world.

Canadian craft historian Sandra Alfoldy suggests we can trace critical thinking about materials, where close connections are made between building and craft regarding common materials and skill, from Gottfried Semper in the late nineteenth century through developments

[1]Letter from P.M. Scott to Peter Zavordny, October 1 1979 re The Sturdy-Stone Centre," R 1053 File 91, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; "Zelmer, Sturdy-Stone Bldg, Proposal for Art," R 1053 File 91, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[2] Daniel Miller, "Materiality an Introduction," in *Materiality,* ed. Daniel Miller, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 4.

[3] Adrian Forty, *Concrete and Culture: A Material History,* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 8.

[4] "culture, n." OED Online, Oxford University Press, accessed 11 Dec. 2013, http://0-www.oed.com.mercury.concordia.ca/view/Entry/45746?rskey=iHOGl3&result=1.

in twentieth-century philosophy.[5] Semper developed four categories that linked the materials and processes of craft with architecture: textile processes especially weaving, tectonics involving carpentry and framing, ceramics understood as moulding, and stereotomy in terms of masonry for stone building. He also precisely designated specific physical properties to these categories. In the case of clay he described it as: "[s]oft, readily formed (plastic) capable of hardening, lending itself to molding and shaping in many forms, and once hardened, holding its form permanently." Masonry was: "[f]irm, *densely aggregated*, resistant to crushing and buckling, and thus of a considerable reactive firmness and thus well suited to being worked by the removal of parts of the mass in any chosen form, and to being combined in regular pieces into stable systems, in which *reactive* firmness is the principle of the construction."[6] Clay then, formed one category and masonry another. However, these categories overlap as clay/ceramic tiles become concerns of masonry, and concrete blocks, ostensibly masonry, are in fact formed by moulding, which for Semper was the essential characteristic of clay. Semper recognized the levels of nuances explaining that "bricks, roof tiles, terra-cotta, and the glazed tiles that are used to line walls…belong more properly either to stereotomy or to textile art, since the result is either an inlay, and thus related to masonry, or a covering for walls [and thus related to textile art]."[7] This complicates any separation of materials based on their processes or characteristics. Fifty years later, Adolph Loos articulated in his writings and his work the idea of the purity of the non-ornamented object, the truth of the beauty inherent in materials.[8] The implication was that materials have their own truth, something Semper was also after in developing his categorizations. Of course, Loos was not the first to be associated with this concept that had been proposed sixty years previously by A.W.N. Pugin, and consequently developed by John Ruskin, Charles Eastlake, and Violett-Le-Duc.[9] Theodor Adorno's 1965 essay, "Functionalism Today,"

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[5] Sandra Alfoldy, *The Allied Arts: Architecture and Craft in Postwar Canada,* (Montreal & Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 26.

[6] Gottfried Semper, "Introduction to *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*," in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European & American Writings, 1750-1940,* ed. Isabelle Frank, trans. David Britt, (New Haven Conn: published for The Bard Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York by the Yale University Press 2000), 223.

[7] Semper in Frank, 224.

[8] Adolph Loos, "Ornament and Crime, in Frank, 288-94; James Trilling, *Ornament a Modern Perspective,* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 134.

[9] A.W.N. Pugin, *The true principles of pointed or Christian architecture: set forth in two lectures delivered at St. Marie's, Oscott.* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1853), 1-2. Brent Brolin brings this to our attention in Brent Brolin, *Architectural Ornament: Banishment & Return,* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Co, 2000), 94; John Ruskin, " 'The Lamp of Truth' and 'The Lamp of Life'" in Frank, 156-58; Charles Eastlake, *Hints on household taste in*

critiqued Loos' "cult of materials [that] created an aura of essentiality about them," ultimately suggesting, as Alfoldy also points out, that materials cannot be essentialized.[10] "For the forms [as dictated by the qualities of the material], even the materials, are by no means merely given by nature…History has accumulated in them."[11] Alfoldy's own observation of the shared qualities of clay and concrete, "both malleable materials with great expressive content," serves as an opening for the questions posed in this chapter. Here, I look to the close affinity of, and intersections between, ceramics and concrete through an examination of the materials, their histories, and processes of their manipulation and transformation.[12]

Alfoldy also suggests that to understand architectural craft we consider "truth to materials" as historically contingent.[13] Such "truth" is tied to Max Weber's "ideal type," considered here as a generality of attributes or purification of process, a concept in fact utopian in nature, that, Alfoldy suggests, "is useful in examining how meaning is applied to material."[14] However, seeking a pure essence or understanding of a material problematically removes it from its place within a variety of cultural interactions. How meaning is derived from material, how material makes meaning, and how someone, together *with* the material, makes meaning must be carefully considered. Hence the need to look at how "material" might be understood. Alfoldy notes that Canadian architectural historian Myriam Blais proposes an understanding of matter as a "*mere* substance," (my italics) which may be transformed into material that "represents the aptitude that the artist recognizes in matter…Turning matter into materials constitutes the very first artistic and creative gesture: it is the origin of construction and consequently, of architecture."[15] Blais' argument is based on the need to reinstate knowledge of materials in order to invigorate art in architecture.[16] The designation of this matter one works with as "mere" clearly privileges human creativity over the matter used to express it. I suggest these attempts to

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furniture, upholstery and other details (1872), (London: Longmans, Green, 1869), 23, 63, 68, 83; Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, *Discourses on Architecture,* translated by Henry van Brunt, (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1875).

[10] Theodor W. Adorno, "Functionalism Today," in *Rethinking Architecture: A reader in cultural theory,"* ed. Neil Leach, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 8-9.

[11] Ibid, 15.

[12] Alfoldy, 2012, 32.

[13] Ibid, 56.

[14] Kim, Sung Ho, "Max Weber", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Fall 2012 edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed 12 Dec. 2013, URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/weber/; Alfoldy, 2012, 57.

[15] Myriam Blais, "The Meaning of Techniques and Materials," in *Common Ground: Contemporary Craft, Architecture and the Decorative Arts,* ed. Gloria Hickey (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1999), 50.

[16] Ibid, 46-55.

understand and differentiate among matter, material, and materiality ultimately perpetuate modernism's binary hierarchies underscoring its propensity to sustain unsymmetrical relations between humans and non-humans. Alfoldy ultimately argues, "matter, material and the immaterial are inseparable within the Allied Arts,"[17] a position I will expand upon here in relation to the Sturdy-Stone Centre and its decorative mural program.

The exclusivity of ceramics in the decorative program of the concrete Sturdy-Stone Centre signals a need to speak to the choice of materials and material juxtaposition.[18] Therefore it is important to address current arguments about the meaning of material and materiality, concepts that are at the forefront of much interdisciplinary discussion. In order to do so, I turn to an understanding of materials developed by anthropologist Tim Ingold and the culture of materials developed by architectural historian Adrian Forty. Both these authors challenge the idea of materials as merely physical substances distinct from processes and environment. They stress the need to integrate the history of materials, practice, and gesture in any discussion of materials such as the concrete of the building and the clay/ceramics of the murals. Their approaches suggest we look beyond finite physical boundaries and what is understood as the inherent properties of materials, the "truth" of their materiality, or in other words their "objectness," to also become aware of "the material flows and formative processes wherein they come into being." An approach that conceptually separates matter and material, as Blais suggests, ignores how it exists beyond human intervention. In fact material in human hands is only a continuation of its various processes and incarnations.

Ingold observes that studies in material culture and anthropological engagements with materiality often fail to take into account the materials or processes associated with production.[19] While craft history has traditionally looked at just this, it has often been marginalized within academic discourse because it concentrates on the acquisition of skill over symbolic content of the object.[20] Ingold's approach returns academic anthropological discussion to precisely these concerns, and thus validates craft's traditional preoccupations, while nuancing the discussion.

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[17] Alfoldy, 2012, 27.
[18] Two suggestions for textile hangings submitted in 1979 for the Sturdy-Stone Centre were rejected by the government, indicating the importance of material considerations. Letter from Lois Zelmer and Wayne Zelmer to D.E. Foley, September 12, 1979, R 1053 File 91, SPMC President's Office Saskatchewan Archives Board; Letter from P.M. Scott to Mr. Peter Zadvorny, re The Sturdy-Stone Centre, October 1, 1979, R 1053 File 91, SPMC President's Office Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[19] Tim Ingold, "Materials against materiality," *Archaeological Dialogues* 14, no.1 (June 2007): 1.
[20] Alfoldy, 2012, 26.

The affordances of a particular material are important, but these are only realized because of a series of environmental engagements encountered within cultural constraints and histories, in other words, understood as an organic or ecological interaction. Ingold suggests a distinction should be made between materiality and materials in a move to emphasize the properties of materials and their importance in the processes of production. He notes materiality is usually comprehended in two ways: as either "the 'brute materiality of the physical world" or as "the ways this world is appropriated in human projects," examples seen with Semper and Blais. Moreover, he proposes this distinction only serves to perpetuate a dualistic model of existence.[21] His preferred term, "materials," refers to "matter considered in respect of its occurrence in processes of flow and transformation."[22] Ingold also asks us to "remember how materials were understood in the days of alchemy," as currently the science of chemistry fails to recognize the gestural interrelationships between material and the body.[23] Therefore the properties of materials are best understood not as "attributes," but as "histories" that include techniques, amalgamations, and interfaces.[24]

This does not preclude that when we encounter materials they have no noteworthy physical properties, but rather that these properties are results of significant processes themselves, and apprehended within various ecological situations that need to be taken into consideration. What we work with is never "mere." In light of such an argument, this chapter discusses the significance of the interface of clay and concrete in the Sturdy-Stone Centre through the intersections of their histories, processes, transformations, and applications. It speaks to how the practices, ideas, and physical properties of each of these materials inflect and reflect the meanings and identities surrounding the Sturdy-Stone mural project and each other. I take into consideration once again Latour's admonition that groups are composed of a variety of entities and that it is necessary to follow the actors themselves. The importance to the architects, government and the SAB to include both clay and concrete as key materials of this building has precipitated this consideration, and consequently led to an exploration of their identities in Saskatchewan, considered both separately and together. The subject of this chapter is the Sturdy-

[21] Tim Ingold, "Towards an Ecology of Materials," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41, (2012): 439, 432, DOI, 10.1146/annurev-anthro-081309-145920, accessed 9 Aug. 2013.
[22] Ibid, 439.
[23] Ibid, 434,
[24] Ibid; Ingold, 2007, 15.

Stone Centre as a physical grouping of materials, an amalgam of histories and processes of clay and concrete.

Clay

Clay has been integral to all forms of life in Saskatchewan since the Cretaceous Period. Substantial clay deposits, some of freshwater origin and others of marine origin, are found primarily south-west and south-east of Regina, but also around Saskatoon, deposited as a result of erosion and glaciation.[25] Across the Whitemud region of the prairies, which includes southern Saskatchewan, the abundant ancient fossil remains of extinct flora and fauna continually being excavated underscore clay's prehistoric importance. Evidence from archaeological investigation in central and southern Saskatchewan has confirmed First Nations use of clay for pottery for two thousand years.[26] With European settlement in the late nineteenth century, clay became one of the earliest industrial resources in southern Saskatchewan at the turn of the twentieth century, and supplied jobs to many people throughout the twentieth century. For early European immigrants clay sod was essential as the building material of their first basic homes while they began to work the land. Clay is also a fundamental consideration in agriculture, and, as such, important to Saskatchewan, a province that until 1970 was primarily rural and depended heavily, as it still does today, on its grain production as its economic engine. An American geology report explains clay's contribution to agricultural practices:

> Clay, then, regulates the moisture of the soil, its base and water-supplying power, acidity, tilth, and the general physical and chemical properties. At the same time it is important in soil classification. Clay is, therefore, one of the most fundamentally important substances in the soil.[27]

The author also points out that it was only in the 1930s that a substantial body of research resulted in the scientific analysis of clay in soil, proving the complex juxtapositions of different

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[25] Mineral Resource Map of Saskatchewan, 2012 edition, Saskatchewan Ministry of Energy and Resources, http://www.er.gov.sk.ca/mineralresourcemap, accessed 11 July 2012; Donald F. Acton, Glenn A. Padbury and Colette T. Stushnoff, "Prairie," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/prairies.html, accessed 11 July 2012.

[26] Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, A Teaching Guide to Saskatchewan Archaeology, (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2010), 15, http://www.saskarchsoc.ca/resources-teaching-archaeology-in-schools-2/, accessed 11 Aug. 2013.

[27] W.P. Kelley, "Modern Clay Researches in Relation to Agriculture," *The Journal of Geology* 50, no.3 (April-May 1942): 309.

forms of clay in "practically all soils."[28] Agricultural practices in general depend on the amount and type of clay in the soil that affects its tilth, erosion, permeability, and ability to hold and exchange nutrients.[29] This is particularly important in Saskatchewan with its relatively arid climate, glacial deposits, and constant erosion. This brief introductory historical survey points out that in the first half of the twentieth century in North America, clay became "modernized" in that it became a subject of the earth sciences and biology with applications in agriculture and the construction industry. While ubiquitous, it became the subject of a highly specialized field of study.

Clay mining and brick making contributed to the manufacturing, building and cultural industries in Saskatchewan and provided clay-based products used both nationally and internationally. By encouraging the establishment of an innovative ceramic engineering program at the University of Saskatchewan in 1921, the first of its kind in Canada, the provincial government implicated itself in the clay industry.[30] Its first professor and department researcher, W.G. Worcester, contributed much to the development of the Saskatchewan and Western Canadian clay industries that ultimately involved a wide range of applications including not only the building industry, but also transportation, manufacturing, and studio pottery. Worcester described the initial implication of the Saskatchewan government: "The Provincial Government of Saskatchewan with true western spirit was awake to the great possibilities and value of the latent clay resources to their province, championed largely by the Hon. Chas. A. Dunning."[31] Dunning, who had moved from provincial treasurer and minister in charge of the Bureau of Labour and Industries to become Premier of Saskatchewan, was just the first of several premiers who were implicated in supporting various incarnations of this industry. These included T.C. Douglas, Ross Thatcher, and Allan Blakeney, and their involvement points to the importance accorded clay.

[28] Kelley, 1942, 309.
[29] Ibid, 317.
[30] W.G. Worcester, "Canada's First Ceramic School: University of Saskatchewan," *Journal of the American Ceramic Society* 6, no.1 (1923): 108.
[31] Ibid.

Figure 24: Erosion of Clay in the Massold Canyon Area near Claybanks

The mandate of Worcester's new department was clear: it would have a four-year ceramic engineering program that included studies in "sciences, chemistry, physics, German or French, geology and the general principles of clay working, rather than specialize on certain ceramic lines," and also contemplated a trade school to train skilled workmen.[32] The physical layout of the ceramic department encompassed several rooms dedicated to kilns that used oil as well as local coal, later converted to gas, machinery for clay grinding and preparation, pottery wheels, augers, presses, plaster, equipment for clay body making and glaze formulation, in all "a general line of ceramic machinery."[33] The inclusion of plasterwork as part of the program indicates the department considered the possibility of mould making. As one objective of this program was to investigate the feasibility of industrial ceramics, Worcester and his assistant tested recipes for "firebrick, building tiles, and hotel chinaware," explored applications in the glass and paper industries, and created objects such as paperweights, bowls and vases. The larger vessels were shown at craft and trade shows to advertise Saskatchewan clays, while the University of Saskatchewan, the province and the Saskatoon Board of Trade used the

[32] Worcester, 1923, 109.
[33] Ibid, 109-110.

paperweights, stamped with "Made from Saskatchewan Clay," for advertising.[34] Worcester was adamant his Ceramic Department's interests were quite divergent from an art school's concern with throwing and modelling, but all the same, his assistant William Phipps became proficient at the wheel.[35] Despite this reluctance to be officially involved with the arts and crafts, the department did establish close ties with the Saskatoon Arts and Crafts Society in the 1930s because of a mutual interest in clay body and glazing technology. The Ceramics Department was finally forced to shut down in 1951 due to a lack of students.[36] In 2013 the importance of ceramics engineering in Saskatchewan was recognized in an exhibition, "Made from Saskatchewan Clay" held in the University of Saskatchewan library that highlighted many of the objects made from experiments with industrial pottery during the decades when the department flourished.[37]

The need for Worcester's department grew partly from the challenges faced by early clay product companies in Saskatchewan. Worth regarding because of their architectural and industrial contributions are two major Saskatchewan businesses, Claybanks Brick Plant and Estevan Brick, both established during the first decade of the twentieth century.[38] The Claybanks Brick Plant was particularly known for its refractory brick and tiles used in high fire situations including flue and furnace linings: examples included steam engines, locomotive arch blocks, corvette warship fireboxes and the rocket launch pads of Cape Canaveral.[39] It also produced facebrick used throughout the province for buildings. In some instances, these facebricks were glazed with different colours laid in decorative geometric patterns, and many examples are still found in downtown Moose Jaw on the Bellamy Block, the Hammond Building and the Capital

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[34] From the University Archives: U of S promoted Sask. pottery, 1921-51," *University of Saskatchewan On Campus News* 8, no. 1 (April 20 2001), http://news.usask.ca/archived_ocn/april20-01/archives.shtml, accessed 13 July 2012.
[35] Duff Spafford, "University of Saskatchewan Pottery," *Saskatoon History Review,* University, no.1 (2007)*:* 44-49. Published online in 10 nodes as "University of Saskatchewan Pottery by Duff Spafford." Among these nodes specifically see "Saskatchewan Pottery –Phipps," University of Saskatchewan Pottery Collection, http://library2.usask.ca/pottery/node/5, accessed 13 July 2012.
[36] From the University Archives: U of S promoted Sask. pottery, 1921-51," *University of Saskatchewan On Campus News* 8, no. 1 (April 20 2001), http://news.usask.ca/archived_ocn/april20-01/archives.shtml, accessed 13 July 2012.
[37] University of Saskatchewan, University Library, University and Archives Special Collections, Third Floor Exhibition, " 'Made From Saskatchewan' - The University of Saskatchewan Ceramics Department," Clay, http://library.usask.ca/archives/exhibitions-digital/exhibitions/pottery.php, accessed 13 July 2012.
[38] As is common with brick companies throughout Canada, complex name and ownership changes form part of their histories, and for simplicity in the case of these two companies, they will be referred to as they appear in the Saskatchewan Archives.
[39] "Claybank Brick Plant: National Historic Site," http://claybank.sasktelwebsite.net/Visit%20the%20Brick%20Plant.html, accessed 14 July 2012.

Theatre.[40] The Claybanks Brick plant also famously supplied brick for the addition to Québec's Château Frontenac[41] and Saskatoon's Bessborough Hotel.[42] Claybanks profited from the technical help of W.G. Worcester, and later employed his son, J. Cameron Worcester as a technician.[43] In the mid-1950s the plant experienced financial difficulty and discontinued its face brick line, but in 1955 A.P. Green Firebrick Company of Missouri acquired a controlling interest in the company, with complete control in 1962. As a high refractory firebrick company it operated under the name Dominion Fire Brick and Clay Products until 1970, and between 1971 and 1989 as a subsidiary of A.P. Green Refractories (Canada) Ltd.[44] This history is significant as the high fire refractory bricks used in studio pottery kilns throughout Canada were made with both Dominion Fire bricks and A.P. Green bricks.[45] In 1989 the Claybanks Brick Plant was finally closed because of outmoded equipment and corporate downsizing.[46] The high regard for Claybank firebricks is evident in their use for a patterned patio in Moose Jaw on Langdon Crescent, steps from the library and art gallery. The stamped Claybank name appears repeatedly on the faces of the paler yellow firebricks that are set in a pattern with recuperated red building facebricks.

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[40] "Pattern on the Bellamy Block in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan," Image 217, "Pattern on TeePee Moka brick Bellamy Block in Moose Jaw Saskatchewan," Image 169, "Teepee Moka brick pattern rehabilitated Capital Theatre building," Image 176. Claybank Brick Building and Patterns, Claybank Brick Plant National Historic Site and Museum, Claybank, Saskatchewan, "A Little Brick Plant n the Middle of Nowhere," VirtualMuseum.ca, accessed 17 July 2012. http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?lg=English&ex=00000548&fl=0&id=exhibit_home

[41] "Chateau Frontenac tower construction, 1920s, with face brick from Claybank," Image 276, Claybank Brick Building and Patterns,

[42] Frank Korvemaker, "The Claybank Brick Plant, A Canadian Treasure," in *Sighting, citing, siting: Crossfiring/Mama Wetotan*, eds. Kathleen Irwin and Rory MacDonald, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 2006), 23.

[43] J. Cameron Worcester, "Looking Back," Employee Stories, Claybank Brick Plant National Historic Site and Museum, Claybank, Saskatchewan, VirtualMuseum.ca. http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=00000548&sl=4324&pos=1, accessed 17 July 2012.

[44] Saskatchewan Archives Board, Claybank Brick Plant Fonds, BF 1, "Biographical History," http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/claybank-brick-plant-fonds;rad, accessed 10 July 2012.

[45] "Claybank Brick Plant: National Historic Site," http://claybank.sasktelwebsite.net/Visit%20the%20Brick%20Plant.html, accessed 12 July 2012.

[46] "Biographical History," Claybank Brick Plant Fonds, BF 1.

Figure 25: Claybank Brick façade, Bellamy Block, Moose Jaw

Figure 26:
Claybank Brick façade, Hammond Building, Moose Jaw

Figure 27: Claybank Brick firebrick patio Moose Jaw

Following the Claybanks closure, the province indicated interest in this location as an historical site because it spanned centuries of First Nation, early settler and industrial use. A.P. Green subsequently donated the land, as well as the plant, its machinery, and equipment to the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation. In 1996 it was declared a national heritage site, and two years later it was officially designated a provincial heritage property.[47] A decade later this historic site was the location of a two-part "sound and installation exhibit (over 20 artists), a large-scale, site specific performance (30 more artists), and a community-based event (50 more students and volunteers)," *Sighting, citing, siting: Crossfiring/Mama Wetotan,* that "explored the significance of the resources of the Claybanks area to the aboriginal culture that has, since recorded time, marked the site, and to the non-aboriginal cultures that have proliferated there since the mid-nineteenth century."[48] The historical uses of clay have been kept alive in Saskatchewan through Claybanks, where their histories are explored, contested and honoured.

[47] "Biographical History," Claybank Brick Plant Fonds, BF 1, Saskatchewan Archives Board, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/claybank-brick-plant-fonds;rad, accessed 10 July 2012. For a detailed description of the Claybanks project see Korvemaker, 21-28.
[48] Irwin and MacDonald, 7.

Figure 28: Aerial view of Claybanks Brick Plant, 2003

Estevan clay was unsuitable for refractory bricks, but very suitable for face and common bricks. In the 1920s it expanded to include "Scots Gray" building tile and terra-cotta when it brought in white clay from Eastend Saskatchewan.[49] Although it closed in 1932 due to the Great Depression, it was revived under the 1944 CCF government, which reopened it as a crown corporation called Saskatchewan Clay Products.[50] In 1964, with the arrival of Ross Thatcher's provincial Liberals who favoured free enterprise, the Estevan Brick Company was returned to the private sector, but the province remained the majority shareholder. The following year, to encourage support for the brick industry, the Thatcher government also ordered that Saskatchewan brick be used in any public provincial building construction. As Claybanks had already ceased facebrick production, this was a clear endorsement of Estevan brick. Estevan brick can be found in several provincial buildings including the Estevan Court House, a designated provincial historic site that also incorporates Tyndall stone as trim, the 1936 art deco Federal Building in Regina, and Regina's 1963 Saskatchewan Power Building that combined brick from Esteven with a curved modernist design.[51] Its white brick line is also seen throughout

[49] "Administrative History," Estevan Brick Plant Fonds, Saskatchewan Archives Board, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/estevan-brick-fonds;rad, accessed 10 July 2012.
[50] David M. Quiring, "Crown Corporations and Publicly Owned Enterprises," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/crown_corporations_and_publicly_owned_enterprises.html, accessed 13 March 2011.
[51] Estevan Court House was designed by the provincial architect and engineer Maurice Sharon in the neo-classical style in 1930. "Estevan Court House," Canada's Historic Places, A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration, http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=4087, accessed 10 March 2013; "Federal Building," Canada's Historic Places, A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration, http://historicplaces.ca/en/rep-

Québec. Estevan had a reputation in the 1980s as one of the most modern industrial clay operations in Canada, using six different kinds of Saskatchewan clay in various combinations to produce over one hundred different products.[52] Unfortunately due to market shrinkage it was closed in 1997.[53]

Figure 29: View of the front façade of the Estevan Courthouse 2004.
Estevan brick and Tyndall stone

The importance of the brick industry in Saskatchewan is evident as well in the bricklaying trade school established in Saskatoon that attracted many immigrants from Europe and the British Isles in the postwar years. Jake Ketler, a former student of the trade school and later a partner in Masonry Contractors Limited, explained many of the workers from Britain had to relearn aspects of their trade to adapt to the weather conditions and different traditions of Saskatoon. Because of the experience garnered during the postwar bricklaying boom, companies such as Masonry Contractors Limited, which was responsible for the installation of the Tyndall stone facing and the ceramic wall murals for the Sturdy-Stone Centre, were able to diversify into other facing materials.[54]

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reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=4265, accessed 10 March 2013; Bernard Flaman, "Architecture," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/architecture.html, accessed 10 March 2013.

[52] Estevan Local History Committee, "Estevan Brick Ltd." A Tale That is Told, http://cap.estevan.sk.ca, accessed 10 April 2008.

[53] "Administrative History," Estevan Brick Plant Fonds, Saskatchewan Archives Board, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/estevan-brick-fonds;rad, accessed 9 July 2012.

[54] Jake Ketler interviewed by the author, Saskatoon 26 May 2011; Department Memo from Dennis C. Floate to D.E. Foley, Deputy Minister Re Cornerstone Ceremony-Saskatoon, May 31, 1977, R 1613 File 3.2, SPMC President's

Today clay is still an important resource, and industry analysis indicates it holds possibilities for market expansion and diversification in the future. Aside from construction bricks and tiles and as refractory products, Saskatchewan clays currently have extensive uses in industry: kaolin can be used in the paper industry as a filler and coater, as well as in paint, rubber, plastic, adhesives, and ceramics; as an additive to cement a superheated kaolin (metakaolin) increases its strength, durability, and water impermeability and is used especially in the oil patch and construction industries; and bentonite with its high swelling capacity serves as a fertilizer carrier, as a binder in animal feed, reservoir sealing, and as a foundry sand binder. There is also potential for bentonite use as a pesticide carrier, as an agent in water as effluent purification and in pet litter. While Saskatchewan kaolin reserves have yet to be commercially exploited, they are estimated at one hundred and fifty to two hundred million tonnes. Metakaolin production, however, is underway near Wood Mountain Saskatchewan.[55] Bentonite reserves are gauged at ten million tonnes, although bentonite is now exploited at just one quarry.[56] As there are few extensive bentonite and kaolin sources in Canada, these clays could assume increased importance to Saskatchewan's economy. Clay's persistent industrial relevance ensures continued resonance for the material-based decorative mural program of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, which takes on the identity of just another creative transformation of a material that is used in many ways.

The industrial Saskatchewan clay story and the studio pottery movement intersect in two instances: through the experimental functional objects made of Saskatchewan clay by the Ceramics Department at the University of Saskatchewan 1921-1951, which have already been mentioned, and through the use of Saskatchewan clay in the formulation of commercial clay bodies, marketed to studio potters through Plainsman Clay situated in Medicine Hat Alberta.[57] Plainsman Clay became the major supplier of dry clay and pre-mixed clay bodies to Canadian ceramicists in the 1970s with the explosion of the studio ceramic movement. This company

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Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board. Masonry Contractors Limited was founded in the early 1950s by Len Jones who had taught Jake Ketler, with Ketler as the managing partner.

[55] Michel Dumont, "Clays," Canadian Minerals Yearbook, National Resources Canada: Mineral and Metals Sector, 2008, http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/markets/canadian-minerals-yearbook/2008/commodity-reviews/8528, accessed 3 Jan. 2014. See also "Kaolin" Government of Saskatchewan, Economy, Mineral and Energy Resources of Saskatchewan, http://www.er.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=3915fe4e-e5df-4fd0-9296-85638c27f651, accessed 13 July 2012.

[56] "Bentonite," Government of Saskatchewan, Economy, Mineral and Energy Resources of Saskatchewan, http://er.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=c2632f7c-2b48-4648-854d-bc9680b2426b, accessed 13 July 2012.

[57] Plainsman Clays Limited, http://www2.plainsmanclays.com/index.php, accessed 11 July 2012.

developed because of decades of industrial ceramic manufacturing in Medicine Hat.[58] Fine white Saskatchewan clays from Eastend, lying in six-foot seams under twenty-six feet of soil and rock, were first used in the industrial manufacturing of Medalta pottery in Medicine Hat Alberta in 1920. Eastend quickly became an essential clay source for Medalta's production of functional and decorative pottery, and supplied different grades of clay used for different purposes by the company.[59] Saskatchewan also eventually supplied Medalta with "chocolate clay," described as "a dark, plastic clay which burned a lighter colour than stoneware" from Chocolate Drop Hill at Eastend, white clay from Willows, and stoneware clays from East End and Ravenscrag. The Willow deposit was actually a "high grade ball clay resembling kaolin, or porcelain clay, in its properties."[60] Until its 1938 discovery in Saskatchewan, this type of clay had to be imported by Canadian potteries from the United States.[61] As well as using this clay for its own production, Medalta supplied clay to the Vancouver School of Art, Art School at Banff, the Edmonton Museum of Arts, and the Junior School of Art in Calgary. [62]

Eastend clay beds were also key to the establishment of the studio pottery movement in Saskatchewan. As Sandra Alfoldy explains, Saskatchewan potter and educator Patricia Wiens, trained in the Leach aesthetic at the University of Manitoba, was charged in the early 1950s by the Executive Secretary of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Norah McCullough, to set up "a fully operational studio for the use of local communities."[63] Such an interest in the use of local or national clay resources resonates with the Arts and Crafts Movement ethic of looking to local sources, an approach that was also expressed in the Leach tradition and its sister *Mingei* Movement from Japan.[64] A few decades earlier this philosophical approach had been explained to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, by the internationally acclaimed Danish-Canadian potter Kjeld Deichmann. His remarks were included

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[58] An extensive history of the clay industry in Medicine Hat has been written and will not be retold here. For a detailed account see Marylu Antonelli and Jack Forbes, *Pottery in Alberta: The Long Tradition*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1978).
[59] Anne Hayward, *The Alberta Pottery Industry 1912-1990: A Social and Economic History,* Mercury Series History Division Paper 50, (Hull QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization), 20, 22, 38-40.
[60] Antonelli and Forbes, 90.
[61] Ibid. See also W.N. Hamilton and Pauline H. Babet, "Commercial Utilization of Alberta Clays and Shales," *Alberta Clays and Shales: Summary of Ceramic Properties,* Economic Geology Report 3, March 1975, Edmonton: Alberta Research, 59-61, http://www.ags.gov.ab.ca/publications/ECO/PDF/ECO_3.pdf, accessed 2 July 2012.
[62] Antonelli and Forbes, 64, 116.
[63] Sandra Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making*, ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery 2005), 12.
[64] A discussion of the *Mingei* Movement is to be found in Chapter 9 of this dissertation.

in the 1951 final report regarding the definition of handicrafts: "An individual product of usefulness and beauty, created by hand on a small scale, preferably by the same person from start to finish, employing primarily the raw materials of [his] own country and when possible of his [own] locality." [65] Deichmann also considered the importance of his own pottery's artistic program rested on "using Canadian earths, metals, minerals and ashes, to capture the subtle essence of Canada."[66] The use of the land itself inserted pottery into the landscape tradition of Canadian art and became important in developing regional and national identities.[67]

Studio potters eventually came to rely on clay from Medicine Hat through the business ventures of Luke Lindoe, studio potter, educator, businessman, sculptor and painter. Lindoe, who set up the ceramic program at the Alberta College of Art in 1947 and a decade later worked for the Medicine Hat Brick & Tile Company, used his studio and industrial experience to fill this marketing niche. In 1964 he and his wife, Gail, founded Plainsman Clay to provide a reliable source of clay to the burgeoning studio pottery movement and art institutions in Canada and the northern United States. Plainsman carefully formulated clay bodies suitable for a variety of studio ceramic practices, as well as shipping out pure powdered clay that could be mixed by potters themselves using their own clay recipes. In 1973 Plainsman supplied five million pounds of clay to Canadian studio potters across the country. The company was subsequently sold in 1980 to a group from Montreal headed by Normand Poulin, which was followed by its sale in 1984 to I-XL Industries of Medicine Hat.[68] Plainsman Clays today advertise "select-mined clays specifically for pottery related uses since 1962 (in Montana, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) [with] knowledge and access to many other deposits."[69] This company with its Saskatchewan connections continues to supply studio potters throughout Canada, and supplied Saskatchewan potters during the 1970s.

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[65] Government of Canada, 1951, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences 1949-1951, Erica and Kjeld Deichmann, Special Study, "Canadian Handicrafts with Special Reference to New Brunswick," 235.
[66] Stephen Inglis, *The Turning Point: The Deichmann Pottery 1935-1963*, (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991), 17.
[67] I have explored this notion in greater detail in: Susan Surette, "Domesticated Wilderness: Landscapes On and In Functional Ceramics," in *On the Table: 100 Years of Functional Ceramics in Canada Feb. 15-April 22, 2007*, curators Sandra Alfoldy and Rachel Gottlieb, (Toronto: Gardiner Museum of Ceramics, 2007), 69-71. See as well, Susan Surette, "Landscape Imagery in Canadian ceramic Vessels," (M.A. Thesis, Concordia University, 2003).
[68] Hayward, 2001 160-162.
[69] Plainsman Clays Limited, http://www2.plainsmanclays.com/index.php, accessed 11 July 2012.

The uses of clay in Saskatchewan embrace a variety of industrial, architectural and artistic applications that are closely interrelated, touching a wide base of the population. Homeowners, business people, industrial workers, construction companies, artists, educators, historians, farmers, and politicians have all been impacted by Saskatchewan's clay. This versatile material has many incarnations and through one, as a handcrafted addition to cast concrete surfaces of a modern, stone-clad Brutalism building, it is evident clay can be adapted to and applied in modern architectural circumstances.

Concrete

While clay is the obvious key material in the Sturdy-Stone mural project, concrete too has a crucial role to play in terms of what it stood for and how it is physically and even metaphorically related to the ceramics. In the 1960s and 1970s Saskatoon architects had embraced the modernist style that relied upon cast concrete, expressed in new buildings at the University of Saskatchewan and those involved in the redevelopment of the downtown core. These buildings arose partially because of advances in concrete technology coupled with the search for a regional style, stemming in part from the rise of Canadian nationalism in the wake of Expo 67, the widespread adoption of modern architecture, as well as the growing, highly mobile, affluent, urban and urbane population.[70] Concrete, understood as an economical building material, was embraced as the building material for a modern and increasingly urban Saskatchewan.

Concrete historian Adrian Forty has recently pointed out, in a manner similar to Ingold's differentiation between material and materiality, there are limitations in looking at concrete as a material. Forty suggests that we look at it in a more inclusive fashion, as a carrier of cultural messages: "As a medium, through which all sorts of ideas, some of them architectural, have been communicated, concrete has been resistant to understanding largely on account of its tendency to slip between category distinctions."[71] Its physical slipperiness acts as a metaphor for its discursive and categorical slipperiness, which also resonate with the predicament of clay. Forty approaches concrete using cultural history, a strategy that is useful in helping to understand and

[70] Brian Allsop, "Prairie Architecture Examined: Post-Modern-The Image and the Challenge," *The Canadian Architect* 24, no.10 (Oct. 1979): 34-37.
[71] Forty, 11.

perhaps better appreciate the cultural implications of the much maligned Sturdy-Stone Centre, described as "one of the ugliest buildings in Western Canada."[72]

The points of contact between the culture of cement and the culture of clay suggest the integration of the Sturdy-Stone murals goes beyond the visual. Cement is manufactured by sintering a mixture of calcium carbonate, often found as limestone, and aluminium silicate, usually obtained as clay. Lime, alumina and silica, the main components of cement, are also constituents of clay.[73] Concrete is understood as modern and primitive, skilful and vernacular, both craft and industrially based, categories that have also in many ways defined ceramics. Concrete can also be used as one of the most inexpensive building materials in the poorest areas of the world and also as forming some of the most daring designs of modern architecture that signal the affluence and technical dominance of a geo/political region. Its manufacturing is reliant on the controlled experiments of scientists and the marketing expertise of entrepreneurs, but the application in the field is dependent upon "the messy hit-or-miss experiments of tradesmen and contractors on the building site" combined with "the craftsmen's experiential knowledge."[74] Like clay, uncured concrete is mud-like, described by W.R. Lethaby in 1913 as "a continuous aggregation like clay or paste,"[75] with an amorphous structure that is at once full of creative potential and disturbing. At the same time, concrete when hardened appears as sturdy as stone. Forty calls this "concrete's double history in the twentieth century – its technically sophisticated developments in shells, pre-stressing, extended spans, but at the same time its crudeness, its atavism."[76] He points out this idea of doubling emerges in the industrial processes of making steel and cement which are then brought together in a non-industrial process of mixing the cement with sand, aggregates and water.[77]

In a similar manner industrial processes in ceramics, such as clay mining and mixing, kiln fabrication, gas or electrical firings, and glaze technologies are brought together with the hands-on experiential and experimental practice of a studio ceramicist. Ingold's approach to materials,

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[72] Jordon Cooper, "The Worst of Saskatoon," 5 April 2011; "Should Saskatoon Save the Sturdy Stone?" 7 April, 2012, Sturdy Stone Centre*, JordonCopper.com* (weblog), http://www.jordoncooper.com/tag/sturdy-stone-centre/, accessed 13 June 2012. Jordon's description is based upon a 1980s article in *Western Living*.
[73] N.B. Hutcheon, "Concrete," CBD-15, *Canadian Building Digests/ NRC-IRC Publications,* http://archive.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/building-digest-15.html, accessed 9 July 2012.
[74] Forty, 15-16.
[75] W.R. Lethaby, "The Architectural Treatment of Reinforced Concrete," *The Builder,* (7 Feb. 1913): 174-176.
[76] Forty, 32-33.
[77] Ibid, 34.

not as a bounded substance, but as "flow and transformation," and gestural interrelationship, as histories of techniques, amalgamations, and interfaces, is important in understanding the affinities between concrete and clay which make them not so unlikely partners. An important relationship between clay/ceramic and concrete is related to their original liquidity and "mushiness" that allows them both to take a wide variety of forms, as long as they are supported in the transition between the wet and dry phases. Therefore the concrete formation processes involving moulds resonates with studio clay formation, where clay is packed into or draped over the forms. Fired clay and concrete are also linked through their impermeability and fireproof attributes. In terms of the industrial processes of mixing commercial clay bodies, the addition of a variety of clays with grog and water is similar to the addition of water to dry cement and stones. Such affinities are evident to those who have worked with both materials, and are actually seen in relief sculptures by Luke Lindoe in Alberta and Québec muralist Maurice Savoie in Newfoundland whose methods of working with clay as relief sculpture were transposed to concrete.[78] Clay and concrete can be understood, then, as not so different if we look at their composition, material expressions, fabrication, and methods of making: similar transformations and gestures are involved.

Peter Collins, who traced the origins of concrete from both practical experiments by craftsmen and scientific experiments by engineers, first documented the history of modern concrete in 1959. Collins suggests modern concrete developed, at least partially, from the use of stucco or mortar as a hard waterproof exterior-covering material coupled with rammed earth construction. Both rammed earth and stucco use lime, aggregates and some form of earth or sand. Stucco, however, is employed to cover a surface, while rammed earth is made by packing earth in forms of removable timber, a method of working that was transferred to concrete construction. By adding mortar (sand, lime, and water) to the rammed earth mixture, a fireproof material more impervious to water was made, the basis of concrete.[79] From the early nineteenth

[78] Luke Lindoe's concrete relief sculpture of the Virgin Mary is in St. Mary's Cathedral, Calgary. Jill Sawyer, "Luke Lindoe's Life in Clay," *Galleries West*, (31 August 2008), http://www.gallerieswest.ca/downloads/slideshows/luke-lindoes-life-in-clay/, accessed 20 July 2013. Lindoe also created a concrete and mosaic relief for the Alberta Provincial Treasury Building, Calgary, 1979-80. Les Graff, "Biography," in *Luke Lindoe Retrospective*, (Calgary: Nickle Arts Museum, University of Calgary, 1998), Navigation: Virginia Christopher Fine Art, http://www.virginiachristopherfineart.com/artists/luke_lindoe/cat1/retro_biography.html, accessed 20 July 2013. Maurice Savoie executed a concrete relief for Memorial University in Newfoundland, 1966, using the skills he had acquired making ceramic reliefs. Maurice Savoie interview by the author, Longueuil Québec, 26 August 2011.
[79] Peter Collins, *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Montreal, Kingston, London, Ithaca McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 19-21.

century, experiments were undertaken to achieve a cement or mortar suitable for a variety of building projects. This lead to the development of Portland Cement that was originally patented in 1824 as a stucco, only going into industrial production in 1844.[80] By the mid nineteenth-century experiments with additions of steel as a reinforcement to concrete opened up the possibilities for large-scale construction.[81] Forty points out that at the end of the nineteenth century architects and engineers in Europe and North America adopted reinforced concrete construction, and simultaneously developed the institutional mechanisms, such as architectural houses and engineering franchising, through which it could be marketed.[82] However, this was still a relatively new building material being applied in bold ways to new architectural forms. By the mid-twentieth century its use had become more widespread, including in the Canadian prairies. The relative youth of the material, coupled with the new types of architectural designs that were developed to exploit its various properties and new extreme environments where it was used meant, in Canada, there was considerable interest in research projects regarding the properties of concrete, and their limits in terms of the interface between design and the Canadian environment.

Trade journals, such as the *Canadian Building Digest* were particularly interested in new developments regarding the possibilities and constraints of concrete. They produced papers on its interactions with other construction materials, its performance under specific soil and water conditions such as those with high sulphate content characteristic of the prairies, as well as its vulnerability to freeze/thaw cycles, extreme temperatures, high winds, chemical erosion and sustained wet weather. Through the 1950s to 1980s articles regularly addressed technical challenges and proposed solutions in adapting this new material to the Canadian environment.[83] While cement was not produced in Saskatchewan, the aggregates for the concrete mix were from local sand and gravel sites and the variations in mineral content could potentially affect the chemical reactions of the concrete involved in its curing and weathering. Mineral content in water, such as sulphates, could also possibly react with the cement.[84] Because one of the

[80] Collins, 36.
[81] Forty, 17; Collins, 38-39, 50.
[82] Forty, 17-20.
[83] See Appendix 4 for a list of Canadian Building Digest published research papers from the 1950s through the 1980s. These articles were accessed through National Research Council Canada Archived - Canadian Building Digests, accessed 6 June 2012, http://archive.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/digest-index.html.
[84] N.B. Hutcheon, "Concrete," CBD 15, *Canadian Building Digests/ NRC-IRC Publications,* accessed 12 June 2012, http://archive.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/digest-index.html.

particular symbolic points of the Sturdy-Stone Centre was its fabrication from local materials, the integration of local aggregates is important because their purchase supported the local landowner who owned the source site.[85] From its raw materials to its final cured form, concrete challenged the modernist visions of the engineers, scientists and architects.

By the 1970s, concrete was falling out of fashion due to the aesthetic implications of weathering. Staining was a problem sometimes addressed by changing the composition of the precast concrete, altering the design to accommodate the staining, or even returning to the addition of cladding, which had been used by the French architect Auguste Perret in the early twentieth century.[86] Perret famously clad 25 bis rue Franklin, 1903-04 with two different designs of ceramic tiling, each used to define the load and non-load bearing aspects of the building. In 1895 Perret had already recognized the affinity between ceramics and cement explaining, "ceramics have always been associated with cement renderings as their natural covering and indispensable decorative complement."[87] Through the 1960s and 1970s, innovative claddings were developed by the construction industry including specially treated metals, glass reinforced polyester, glass reinforced cement, and asbestos cement. The development of mass production and scientific analytical systems to measure a variety of properties of the new materials under different controlled conditions, as well as the education of architects in their application made them viable candidates for cladding.[88] In the mid twentieth-century stone as a cladding for concrete was discouraged, because when juxtaposed with concrete it was feared stone would highlight the poverty of concrete.[89] However, despite such aesthetic concerns about combining stone and concrete and the technical and cost advantages attached to the new materials, architects did turn to stone cladding, sometimes using it to great advantage in contrast with concrete, and sometimes to imitate concrete blocks through the size, colour and dressing of the stone.[90]

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[85]"The owner of the surface of any land is and shall be deemed to have always been the owner of and entitled to all sand and gravel on the surface of the land and all sand and gravel obtainable by stripping off the overburden, excavating from the surface or other surface operation." The Sand and Gravel Act, R.S.S.1978, C.S-5, s.3, paragraph 3. Saskatchewan. 1978. Quoted in Janet Mackenzie, "Industrial Minerals in Saskatchewan: Sand, Gravel, and Stone," Western Development Museum Research: Natural Resources, 14 April, 2003, http://wdm.ca/research.htm.
[86] Forty, 24-25, 54-58; Collins, 181-182.
[87] Auguste Perret, *Revue scientific,* 25 May 1895, 645, quoted in Collins, 182. For a discussion of polychrome ceramics as a decorative covering in France in the early twentieth century see Hélène Guéné, "La Structure et l'enveloppe. Habillage et ornement en architecture (1870-1940)," Histoire de l'art, no. 42/32 (Oct.1998): 17-26.
[88] Alan Brookes, *Cladding of Buildings,* (London and New York: Construction Press, 1983), vii-xi.
[89] Steen Eiler Rasmussen *Experiencing Architecture,* translated by Eve Wendt, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1962), 24-5, 164-5, 169.
[90] Forty, 91-92. Forty points out this was particularly used by Italian architects.

This latter approach can be seen in the Sturdy-Stone Centre. In fact, while Brutalism relied upon an unadorned and undressed concrete surface, the Sturdy-Stone Centre is clad with beige Tyndall stone cut in large slabs whose size refers to the pre-cast concrete block. From a distance the intricate designs of this dolomitized limestone make the surfaces of the building appear to be, in fact, raw concrete. The Tyndall stone protects the surface of the concrete from weathering and therefore provides a better aesthetic solution than stained concrete; and importantly, it anchors the provincial government building within the ancient geological history of the province. The word "cladding" has close links to textiles as coverings of bodies and buildings, and, in fact according to the Tyndall stone supplier to the Sturdy-Stone Centre, "it has been called tapestry stone because of its almost embroidery-like surface, that makes it different from other limestones."[91] Such a move to clad this international modernist building with Tyndall stone was coherent with a growing emphasis in architectural circles to highlight regional particularities through the use of local materials.[92] Cladding such as Tyndall stone and Saskatchewan ceramics certainly addressed the Saskatoon city council's hesitations about the building's aesthetics.

Figure 30: Provincial Office Building (Sturdy-Stone Centre) under construction

In the same manner, the ceramic murals and Tyndall stone on the exterior of the building serve as a cladding to protect the concrete surface underneath. Ironically, these costly relief tiles, commissioned as artworks, and the Tyndall Stone, slices of an ancient seabed, protect their own

[91] "Geology," Gillis Quarries Limited, http://www.tyndallstone.com/companyindex.html, accessed 19 July 2012.
[92] Forty, 103.

support, the much less expensive concrete. If the concrete deteriorates, both the Tyndall Stone cladding and the ceramic murals are threatened; likewise, if the Tyndall Stone and ceramic murals are damaged the concrete material could disintegrate over time. The longevity of all three is dependent upon the upkeep and durability of each separately as well as all together, and as such they form an indissoluble functioning unit. From a monetary point of view, concrete, the least expensive and less aesthetically precious of the three materials, becomes as economically important as the more valued "tapestry" Tyndall stone and the unique and irreplaceable ceramic murals. Concrete is often understood as a global material because of its general recipe, despite its reliance on locally obtained additions, and as such has been perceived as "the material of oblivion, erasing and obliterating memory, cutting people off from their past, from themselves, from each other."[93] Locally sourced cladding serves as a counterforce to this, reinserting community histories and materials. Specifically, the addition of the ceramic cladding on the east and west façades initially suggested by the City, eventually embraced by the architects and the Saskatchewan government, promoted by the SAB, and executed by the ceramicists does reconnect people to past histories of Sasktachewan and to each other.

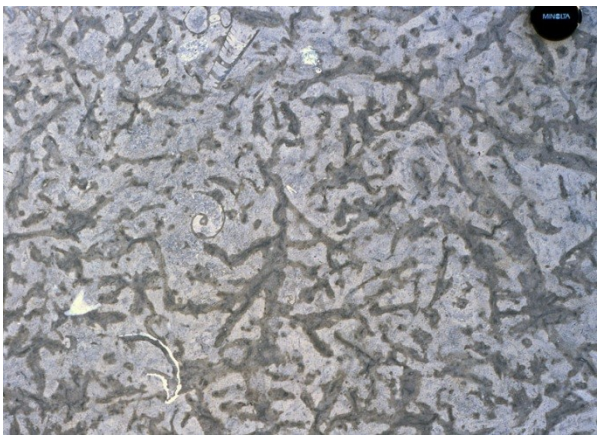

Figure 31: Tyndall Stone showing fossil traces

Fired clay as a cladding material for modern concrete multi-storey buildings was associated with some risk in the post-war years. While terra cotta had effectively and safely been used in Britain and Europe before the twentieth century, the North American emphasis on height created unexpected challenges for the terra cotta cladding that was used on the new skyscrapers. Over time, it was found there was "inadequate provision," made for the processes of thermal

[93] Forty, 103,197.

contraction and expansion of the terra cotta used in tall-framed buildings, such as the Woolworth building in New York.[94] While these problems contributed to investigations into new cladding materials, some research was also dedicated to traditional ceramic materials. Interest in the complexities, rewards, and problems involved in the interfaces between concrete and brick/ceramics spawned many articles published by the National Research Council of Canada.[95] As these materials were used together on buildings that were increasingly taller, laboratory experiments were updated with data from actual field studies that involved longer-term applications in real situations.[96] A survey of studies indicates particular concerns about leakage into and through the concrete, the opposing expansion/contraction behaviour of brick and concrete, as well as thaw/freeze cycles, and appropriate temperature for brick firing as well as effectiveness of sealants such as paint, silicone, and glaze.[97] According to Neil B. Hutcheon, a director of the Division of Building Research at the National Research Council of Canada, Canadian research regarding buildings in a cold climate designated Saskatoon as one of the "five regions selected for the administration and organization of building research in Canada."[98] Technical problems facing the Sturdy-Stone architects, construction companies, and ceramicists, indicated the high risks associated with this project, as well as its inventive design aspects. However, Philip Scott expressed great confidence in the ceramic mural project indicating they actually felt little concern "as all of them were mounted on solid concrete [although] [t]he external ones required allowance for some movement due to temperature." He also pointed out little upkeep has been required aside from some "repointing of masonry."[99] The Sturdy-Stone mural project was not only an aesthetic accomplishment for the provincial government and the architects it was also a technical achievement for the ceramicists and masons.

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[94] Brookes, viii-ix.
[95] Over forty-four articles can be found on the NRC website. Research topics, among others, include moisture absorption, freezing-thawing cycles, porosity, clay firing temperatures, mortar technology, efflorescence, and highrise application. http://archive.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/digest-index.html
[96] W.G. Plewes, CBD-125. Cladding Problems Due to Frame Movements, *Canadian Building Digests*, 1970, National Research Canada, http://archive.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/digest-index.html, accessed 4 July 2012.
[97] A list of Canadian research articles that address the interfaces between concrete and brick and stone as facing can be found in Appendix 5. These articles are available through National Research Council of Canada, http://archive.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc.html.
[98] Neil B. Hutcheon and Gustav O.P. Handegord, *Building for a Cold Climate,* (Ottawa: Institute for Research in Construction, National Research Council of Canada, 1983), 405. Other centres were Halifax, Ottawa, Vancouver and Inuvik.
[99] Philip Scott email to the author 18 Sept. 2011.

Interfaces

The interfaces of clay and concrete are especially important on the exterior of the building because of technical and aesthetic challenges. The two exterior Sturdy-Stone murals were the largest exterior relief murals in Canada made within the context of studio ceramic practice. These isosceles trapezoids are both 17.37 meters high, but cover different areas, as their base line is taken from the width of different-sized and purposed entrances. Because their angles continue up the vertical border of the entrances, they highlight these entrances, the one on the west side with doors for pedestrians, and the one on the east above ground level parking. Sures' western facing exterior mural is composed of circles of rhythmically undulating, handmade stoneware tiles, described as "petal-like formations radiating out to ripples of basket weave," and as a "textured sunburst," because the "sun's rays enhance color and shadow patterns on the 4,200 clay pieces," coloured in "sensuous tones of rust and blue."[100] The Woolsey/Hardy mural on the east façade was interpreted as "(d)epicting an abstract landscape…subliminally suggest(ing) cosmic forces, unicellular life, and creation."[101] The long sides of the murals run parallel to the angled sides of the building, and terminate at the last floor of the parkade. A viewer on the ground is presented with a rectangle in perspective that accentuates the height of the building and contrasts with the almost uniform flat and neutrally coloured Tyndall stone tiles that only reveal their subtle fossil patterns when examined closely. The mural design had to work with this unconventional shape, to be seen from both near and afar, understood monumentally and appreciated in detail. Such requirements challenged the mural designers.

A 1984 British publication pointed out the importance of scale change faced by artists charged with public commissions: "Change of scale is primary to the issue: not only the increased scale of the art work and the extended time-scale of its making. But also an augmentation of considerations about placing, meaning and relevance, and ultimately, the extended life of the work."[102] Just blowing up a drawing or a small-scale maquette is not adequate, as "an appropriate dynamic, a logic of enlargement must prevail."[103] The application of

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[100] Ruth Wright Miller, "Saskatoon," *Arts West* 4, no.6 (Sept./Oct.1979): 10.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Deanna Petherbridge, "Exaggerations of the Public Order: complexities and practicalities of carrying out commissions," in *Art Within Reach: Artists and Craftworkers, architects and patrons in the making of public art,* ed. Peter Townsend, (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, published by "Art Monthly" in collaboration with the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Crafts Council., 1984), 49.
[103] Anthony Caro quoted in Petherbridge, 49.

colour, sculptural forms, texture and design movement that work on a smaller, intimate scale are no longer applicable in a monumental context. Other important factors were the exterior placement and the relief structure. Art historical analyses of Saskatoon artist Eli Bornstein's structurist reliefs describe his exploration in the 1960s onwards with the "increasingly infinite potential of variations and interactions of light and colour, presupposing a nature endlessly varied," in which light serves as a "dynamic factor,[through] its play of colour reflections and cast shadows…changing perceptual relationships between neighbouring planes and grounds."[104] In terms of this, the exterior Sturdy-Stone murals would be interacting with changing atmospheric and daily light conditions and impacted by shadows from neighbouring buildings and vegetation that might be planted.

The odd angle of viewing, as opposed to the accepted normal eye-level frontal position, also necessitated designs that would take into consideration anamorphics, or the unconventional way of seeing large-scale public works. Although the anamorphic effect presents specific problems for particular representational styles, it can be "an opportunity to devise forms which rely upon the movement of the pedestrian to generate their effects."[105] These exterior murals with their different expressions of low relief and colour favour multiple viewing angles that all result in an appreciation for dynamically coloured surfaces and lively forms. The non-representative abstraction found in modern art practices and used in the Sturdy-Stone murals particularly lends itself to this situation where interpretation was left open in order to appeal to a wide public. Perhaps the best hope for these murals can be gleaned from Eli Bornstein's following remarks, a connection that will be discussed on an individual basis for each mural in their respective sections:

> Above all, if abstract public art is to endure, it must be regarded, not as a dispensable decoration, but as a significant expression and celebration of our highest aspirations. Only then can it truly serve as a tribute to those pioneer homesteaders who preceded us, who had so little time for art or music, but upon whose labours rests the relative comfort and affluence we enjoy today.[106]

Endurance of the murals rests not only on their iconography and styles, but on the interface between them and the concrete. The orientation of the murals on the west and east

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[104] Roald Nasgaard, *Abstract Painting in Canada,* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007), 293.
[105] John Dugger quoted in Petheridge, .51.
[106] Eli Bornstein, "Pioneering Abstract Art on the Prairies," in *A Celebration of Canada's Arts: 1930-1970,* ed. Glen Carruthers and Gordana Lazarevich (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1996), 152.

exterior walls is also technically significant: factors regarding freeze-thaw cycles, temperature gradients and moisture distribution have to be taken into account when considering any architectural cladding. These technical factors are particularly relevant as the ceramic cladding for the Sturdy-Stone was to be made by studio potters with no experience in monumental tile projects, much less exterior ones for a northern Canadian climate. This climate was widely understood to present considerable technical challenges as attested to by the volume of research undertaken and disseminated by the National Research Council of Canada into building materials. Installation of such work had never been undertaken in the prairies before, and according to Jake Ketler, the mason who supervised the mounting of the murals for Masonry Contractor Ltd., there were only two companies in the Saskatoon that were able to tackle the job. Masonry Contractors Ltd. already had won the bid for the Tyndall stone installation, and therefore was the Government's obvious choice to handle the murals.[107]

Risks inherent in the mural project are evident in a 1970 publication, "Influence of Orientation on Exterior Cladding," that recognized "the variations that exist because of orientation often have a profound effect on the durability of sealants, mortar, masonry and other wall components."[108] Considerations of temperature gradient, solar radiation absorption, freeze-thaw actions, rain penetration, and wind stresses all impact upon the longevity of the various materials and their ultimate long-term compatibility. Because building research was not undertaken uniformly across the country for all studies, and due to the varying climactic conditions in the different regions of Canada, it would be difficult for Saskatoon architects and contractors to rely on experiments not geared to the specific latitude, moisture, and wind conditions experienced in Saskatoon. The east and west orientation of the exterior murals means they undergo a more extreme temperature gradient in the summer than the south and north walls, a condition reversed in the winter. As well, freeze-thaw cycles recorded for Ottawa and Halifax indicate east and west facing bricks have endured seventy to seventy-nine annual freeze-thaw cycles, more than the north walls but less than the south walls. Wind effects are mostly related to air leakage from buildings and to the wetting of the wall from rain by wind action. East walls

[107] Ketler, 26 May 2011.
[108] C.R. Crocker, " Influence of Orientation on Exterior Cladding, CBD 126" *Canadian Building Digests*, (June 1970), National Research Council Canada, http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/building-digest-126.html, accessed 6 July 2012.

were observed to be more vulnerable to rain wetting than west walls.[109] While this information does not appear to have been discovered by the ceramicists, it was certainly a concern to builders and to the future of the murals.

Another problem confronting the Sturdy-Stone architects was the effect on claddings of the processes of creep and shrinkage, referring to the contraction and expansion factors of the various building materials. Taller concrete buildings, often with cantilevers as seen in the Sturdy-Stone, were still experimental in the early 1970s and it was noticed at the time "designers have not been able to anticipate the adverse results of creep and shrinkage on claddings" used on these new designs.[110] Controlled laboratory research into creep and shrinkage with the amount of real variables could not be applied to definite buildings; as such information regarding this interplay of forces could only be studied under actual conditions in large buildings with a variety of materials.[111] In 1978, just as the Sturdy-Stone building was nearing completion, the NRC's Division of Building Research published a short reminder about preventable stone and brick veneer damage "in the form of spalling, cracking, and bulging, on a number of tall, concrete buildings." The cause of this damage was attributed to the long term shrinkage and creep of concrete coupled with the expansion of the brick (ceramic) veneer. The suggested solution was to allow for these movements by assuring the cladding is "flexibly attached" rather than the "rigid connections" commonly used.[112] Ketler used a system, adapted from the Tyndall stone tiles, where he inserted in the top and bottom of each tile, a custom-bent strip of one inch twelve-gauge tin, which was to be carefully concealed by the adjoining tiles and the "'super-hy-bond' grout."[113] Each tin strip was anchored into the concrete wall by a bolt. This interface formed the flexible attachments that helped with the creepage problem As both stone and ceramic veneers face the Sturdy-Stone, Jake Ketler and Masonry Contractors Ltd. played a crucial role in both the long and short-term success of the murals, and to date this system has functioned well with no

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[109] Crocker..
[110] W.G. Plewes, "Cladding Problems Due to Frame Movements, *Canadian Building Digest* (May 1970), National Research Council Canada, http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc/cbd/building-digest-125.html, accessed 4 July 2012.
[111] Ibid.
[112] D.E. Allen, "Damage to Brick and Stone Veneer on Tall Buildings," Division of Building Research National Research Council Canada, January 1978, http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/obj/irc/doc/pubs/bpn/7_e.pdf, accessed 4 July 2012.
[113] Garry Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," *Pottery in Australia* 22, no.1 (May/June 1983), 26; Ketler, 26 May 2011.

tile loss or damage, although warnings have been recently made concerning galvanized steel anchors.

A NRC report released in 1997 pointed out the variability of the durability of the ties used in masonry cladding. The more durable ties used in the 1970s were galvanized steel or "tin" as they are sometimes called, such as Ketler used for the Sturdy-Stone murals. The zinc coating protects the underlying steel as it "acts as a sacrificial anode - it corrodes while the steel does not," but its lifespan is determined by many environmental factors and the thickness of the coating. Because of these corrosion problems, metal ties in masonry cladding "are expected to last as long as the building, generally 50 to 100 years but often longer in the case of institutional, cultural and religious buildings." Design and construction of the building also affects corrosion risk and rate. Because the mortar joint is the "wettest component to which the tie is exposed, this is the place where corrosion will first appear, but this process can also be compounded by mortar additives such as chlorides. Corrosion is also affected if drying of the wetted tile and masonry is inhibited because the cavity behind the cladding is insulated. This is especially concerning in the case of "glazed brick" because the glazed surface impedes drying. Such would be the case of the glazed tiles of the Woolsey/Hardy mural, and perhaps was a contributing factor to the need of Ketler to take a few rows off and remount them due to the water damage from the cold joint. More recent building codes (1995) now require that buildings higher than eleven meters and designed for longevity, such as the Sturdy-Stone Centre, have "stainless steel ties or their equivalent in corrosion resistance."[114] Ketler himself recognizes the limited lifetime of the Sturdy-Stone building due to corrosion factors, suggesting it will limit the building to a fifty-year lifespan.[115] While the construction of the ceramic murals themselves pose no technical problems and are durable as individual tiles, their structural weakness lies in their integration into the building within a complex web of a variety of materials whose interplay at the time were inadequately studied: masonry cement, concrete, metal ties, insulation, and flashing. This weakness would be mainly evident through bowing or catastrophic collapse, but can be hopefully prevented through careful monitoring and inspection. Ironically, while the metal ties allowed the mural tiles to be mounted, and in fact assured their acceptance by the architects and the

[114] A.H.P. Maurenbrecher, "Corrosion of Metal Ties in Masonry Cladding," Construction Technology Update No. 7, Sept. 1997, Archived Material, National Research Council Canada, http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/ctu-sc/ctu_sc_n7, accessed 4 July 2012.
[115] Ketler, 26 May 2011.

government who were concerned about the safety of the tiles, through their own decay they also threaten to limit the murals' longevity

Conclusion

Art historian Miwon Kwon has analyzed the roles played by late twentieth-century public art. According to her categories, the exterior Sturdy-Stone murals can be understood as *in situ* art that takes its meaning from its location.[116] I would add to that, in light of the previous discussion, some aspects of the meanings of the murals and the building/mural complex are derived as well from the juxtaposition of specific materials in this particular location. The provincial government's artistic directives for the murals to pertain to some aspect of Saskatchewan life was an attempt by a social-democratic government to at least partially mobilize the public's support and assure the art communicated the values of the government to its constituency, in this case that it was a government that particularly marketed itself as championing the people of Saskatchewan. As Kwon suggests the level of "the artist's assimilation into a given community coincides with the *art work's integration* with the site."[117] This was assured through contracting well-known Saskatchewan ceramicists. In 2009, at the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Sturdy-Stone Building sponsored by the Saskatchewan Crafts Council, former premier Allan Blakeney reflected that his vision for Saskatoon's public buildings and public art was modeled on European cities such as Paris and Moscow.[118] According to Blakeney, then, the murals and the building were meant to reach people on a local level, but also to place Saskatoon among the important cities of Europe. By taking care of the people in Saskatoon, this government projected the idea that it was connecting them with global centres.

This chapter has examined key materials of the Sturdy-Stone Centre mural project, clay and concrete and their interface, in order to answer the question of how the physical union of the Sturdy-Stone Centre and its mural program is culturally significant. By closely tracing the group formations and entanglements involved in the histories and uses of these materials, I have argued their cultural significance for this building project should not be ignored. Ingold's notion of

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[116] Miwon Kwon, *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity,* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 11.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Allan Blakeney public remarks at the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the inauguration of the Sturdy- Stone Centre, Saskatoon, 31 July 2009.

material and Alfoldy's recognition of the interconnectivity of the concepts of matter, material and materiality were essential to determine how the building and the murals are interrelated in their raw materials, processes of formation, and even cultural associations. Clay and concrete are not only "mere" matter, but part of physical, organizational and cultural practices and associations that inform how we approach and use them. Establishing associations between clay and concrete draw awareness to the intersections in this project of the local and global, the vernacular and the modern, and importantly the allied nature of the arts through materials.

Technical achievements around the integration of the ceramic murals into the concrete edifice increased the profile of both the architectural firm and the masonry company who were ultimately responsible for the murals' installations. The concrete, Tyndall stone, and ceramic murals physically and aesthetically co-shape one another where the existence of each was and still is dependent upon the other. As postulated by Semper, the tiles themselves reference stereotomy in their form, but their visual play and role as a cover ties them to textiles. Still, their ceramic material created by the transformation of clay, was their essential component for this project, and the physical fusion of the tiles with the concrete takes on metaphorical meaning. This grouping involves many kinds of actors, not all human, enmeshing them all in networks of associations. By gathering together things and objects, matter and materials, people and institutions, this chapter has shown how inter-related processes that entangle nature and society, if we can still make that distinction, are gathered together in the Sturdy-Stone Centre mural project.

PART TWO: THE LIVES OF MURALS

CHAPTER FOUR

"THE CAVEMAN'S BIBLE:" THE EAST FAÇADE MURAL, RANDY WOOLSEY AND GREGORY HARDY

Introduction

The brightly coloured abstract mural on the east-facing wall of the Sturdy-Stone Centre was a collaborative work involving Gregory Hardy, a painter and Randy Woolsey, a potter. Woolsey called the final design for the work "An Illuminated Page From a Caveman's Bible," informally known as "the caveman's bible."[1] The title referred as well to Hardy's characterization of the floating forms of his early paintings as "pictographs"[2] Such an appellation suggests Woolsey and Hardy linked not only the design, but the actions of incising, pressing, scratching, pounding, sculpting, and painting into and onto the clay with philosophical or religious values uttered in this mural – a modern reiteration of petroglyphs and pictographs. In the imposing vertical surface of the mural the earthy toned pigments of the textured abstract forms rendered in stains and glazes bring to mind applied earth pigments on the irregular surfaces and textures of cave walls or cliff faces. From the makers' points of view, their mural was in one sense an expression of systems of beliefs and encounters with the world that predate or transcend the written word, ultimately inviting an archaeological enquiry. This type of consciousness was also seen in Prairie poet Eli Mandel's contemporaneous musings regarding his Saskatchewan travels:

> On the road to Wood Mountain, we saw petroglyphs, signs carved into the rock. Long ago men wrote pictures and words into the land. A curious impulse. It seemed to me then when I saw those, as now, that like the lost home of Estevan, the lost language of the petroglyphs were definitions of the prairie and that it would be in the voices of poets we would hear those definitions again.[3]

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[1] Garry Palacek (sic), "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," *Pottery in Australia,* 22 no.1 (May/June 1983): 26; Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[2] George Moppett, "Gregory Hardy, Journeys in the Landscape," in *Journeys in the Landscape,* Gregory Hardy/ George Moppett, (Saskatoon, Mendel Art Gallery, 2001), 5.
[3] Eli Mandel, *Canadian Forum* 67, (June/July 1977): 29.

First Nation pictographs along the Churchill River in Saskatchewan were initially described only in 1974 by researchers in terms of their symbols along with a "systematic" determination of their "age, cultural affiliation and interpretation."[4] This academic and scientific treatment was closely associated with the controversy around the proposed damming of the Churchill River that passes through the territory of the Denesuline (Dene) First Nations.[5] Alberta artist, Luke Lindoe, was also inspired by pictographs executed by the Blackfoot People on the Milk River when he carved abstract markings into five limestone panels, 1967, on the exterior of Edmonton's Royal Alberta Museum.[6] While Saskatchewan's specific petroglyphs and pictographs were not necessarily the point of reference for Woolsey and Hardy, and in fact European, African, or even Australian Aboriginal works could be the source of their imaginings, what is important here is their feelings of making long-term marks on vertical faces, continuing a tradition practiced around the world for a variety of reasons by various groups over millennia. They were leaving the marks of their presence in the culture and on the land, marks that were meant to endure. The sturdy stone face of the concrete Provincial Office Building offered the perfect location to receive architectural ornament - "the stories and legends of Man."[7]

To trace how "the caveman's bible" came into being as part of these visual narratives involves accounting for a variety of agents that act as mediators according to the sociology of associations articulated in Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). Some of these groups involve humans, while others encompass things or are hybrids composed of people, equipment, tools and materials. Because this mural also became an actor in other group formations involving professional ceramics, the allied arts, and the provincial government, its implication in these groups must also be accounted for. While I use ANT to accomplish this, I also take into consideration technology philosopher Peter-Paul Verbeek's distinction between the long chains of associations involved in ANT accounts and those short chains of associations that are best

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[4] Tim Edward Hodgson Jones, "The Aboriginal Rock Paintings of the Churchill River," MA Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1974, 1.
[5] "Saskatchewan Environmental Society," Saskatchewan's Environmental Champions, accessed 17 Oct. 2013, http://econet.ca/sk_enviro_champions/ses.html; Martin Grajczyk, "Churchill River, Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 19 Dec. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/churchill_river.html; Elaine Hay, "Denesuline (Dene)," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 19 Dec. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/denesuline_dene.html.
[6] Les Graff, 'The Commissions," in *Luke Lindoe Retrospective.* "The Commissions," (Calgary: Nickle Art Museum, University of Calgary, 1998), http://www.virginiachristopherfineart.com/artists/luke_lindoe/cat1/retro_commissions.html, accessed 4 Jan. 2014.
[7] Henry H. Reed, Jr., "Monumental Architecture: Or the Art of Pleasing in Civic Design," *Perspecta* 1, (Summer 1952): 52.

described using post-phenomenology. Post-phenomenology considers what happens to an object or material and the human who makes use of it. While intention (or affordance) resides in an object because of its design, or in a material because of its chemical and physical composition, how, whether, or even what aspects of intention or inherent qualities are realized is contingent on where, by whom, and under what circumstances the object or material is used.[8] In this chapter I demonstrate how considerations of short chains of associations, in turn, become part of the longer chains of group associations. I particularly look to how the people, equipment, and materials respond to one another and when and where they interface in order to establish the means by which they co-constitute one another.

This discussion of the design and fabrication of "the caveman's bible" turns to what archaeologist Bjørner Olsen argues is the need to think of the relationship of making and human intention where a design "emerg[es]from the materials and practices that are intimately involved with them," rather than human imposition. Therefore as I trace the design and fabrication of Woolsey's and Hardy's mural and the ANT networks I make use of material semiotics. The qualities that 'slumber' in the material used, the equipment involved in the processing, the ready-to-hand knowledge of the human producer, the effective history of former things and their production are all affecting the outcome, thus making this a far more complex and entangled process than that suggested by the old style-function debate.[9] In speaking to the human-thing interface, Olsen critiques the antithetical categories of Heidegger's "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand," that posit we are aware of interaction with things "practically and skilfully" or are made aware because "the alien and unfamiliar" confronts us, often experienced as "some sort of disturbance or interruption."[10] He suggests these two extremes can be modified by recognizing an intermediary process of "coming to mind" of materials, practices, or tools, whereby "improvement and change" are initiated through our awareness of disruptions in expected functions. "Coming-to-mind" depends on "knowing how," only acquired by everyday experience

[8] Peter-Paul Verbeek, trans. Robert P. Crease. *What Things Do: Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency, and Design.* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 164-65.
[9] Bjørner Olsen, *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects,"* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), 153. For another discussion of the concept of bundling of characteristics in material and object and their realization as cultural forces in particular circumstances see: Webb Keane, "Semiotics and the social analysis of material things," *Language and Communication* 23, no.1 (2003), 409-425; Webb Keane, "Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning," in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 182-205.
[10] Olsen, 2010, 72-74.

with things involved in a "ready-to-hand" manner. Because of familiar usage of the materials, practices, or tools, a critique of them is possible as they "come to mind," allowing them to be addressed in a "present-at-hand" manner.[11] Such a discussion of processes involved in the manipulations of material and tools is something closely attached to craft discourse and theory and framed within skill.

Throughout the twentieth century and into this century, skill has consistently been defined as an essential component of craft.[12] British craft theorist David Pye addressed this thorny question in 1968, distinguishing between the workmanship of risk and the workmanship of certainty.[13] For Pye, hand making or craft practice involved risk, whereas fabrication with tools and industrial procedures was associated with certainty.[14] He was also aware of the nuances between these extremes, suggesting each, or a combination of them, is appropriate in particular circumstances of object fabrication. In the present chapter I address the complex interplays between the workmanships of risk and certainty that in practice are implicated in the "coming to mind" process. This entails an examination of the materials, methods, sites, labour organization, and tools involved in the making of this east façade mural. I suggest the monumentality of the mural was an important "alien and unfamiliar" element confronting both Woolsey and Hardy that initiated a "coming-to-mind" of their own professional practices, until then "ready-to-hand."

This consideration involves a concept I call the "seepage of monumentality" that informs the processes of making involved in all the Sturdy-Stone Centre murals, but particularly the exterior ones. In the mid-twentieth century, Henry H. Reed, Jr., argued that the idea of the monumental in architecture was a "recent invention," borrowed from the French *monumentale*, to emphasize a building's "grandeur, majesty [and] magnificence." A hundred years earlier, he pointed out that Ruskin had spoken only of the "power" or "sublime" nature of architecture, not

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[11] Olsen, 2010, 164-65. Olsen develops his argument using the three modes of "coming into being" developed by Henry Dreyfus: "conspicuousness, obstinacy, and obtrusiveness." H. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A commentary on Heidegger's "Being and time," division 1*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 79.

[12] Skill is still discussed as a defining component of craft in the following recent works: Peter Dormer ed., *The Culture of Craft: status and future,* (Manchester U.K.; New York: Manchester University Press, 1997; Howard Risatti, *A Theory of Craft: function and aesthetic expression,* (Chapel Hill N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); and Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft,* (Oxford, U.K., New York: Berg,, 2007).

[13] For debates about the relevance of skill see Christopher Frayling and Helen Snowdon, "Skill: A Word to Start an Argument With," *Crafts* 56, (May/June 1982): 19-21; Glenn Adamson, "When Craft gets Sloppy," *Crafts,* no. 211 (March/April 2008): 36-41; Elissa Auther, "Sloppy Craft: An Introduction," *Fiberarts* 37, no.3 (November/December 2010): 38.

[14] David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship,* (London: Cambridge U.P., 1968), 20-23.

its monumentality. Reed contended the use of architectural ornament was essential to attain the sublime, ignored in modernist buildings:

> It is not only that we have given up the little ornaments that answer an emotional need; out of fear of being influenced in any way, except by our navels, we have sacrificed the past, learning, the crafts, all the arts on the altar of "honest functionalism."… We may have put together well-built factories but have we built great monuments? For along with the past and ornament we have tossed out the monumental…It is only with ornament that we can obtain a sense of scale, it is only on ornament that the eye can rest, it is only by ornament that the eye can measure.[15]

Monumentality thus describes both the size and emotional effect of an architectural work, but to earn this adjective entails a corresponding scale in the production of its ornaments. Monumentality therefore seeps into all aspects of the decorative project, including competent management, efficient communication, skilful negotiations with multiple players in committee situations, adequate and appropriate studio space, a qualified work force, technical expertise, appropriate equipment, a reliable source of raw materials, design and draftsmanship skills, large periods of available time and, of course, adequate funding. Subject matter also has to take into consideration audience variation that is likely to shift over time. A 1984 British Arts and Crafts Councils publication sited various prejudices about the ability of craftspeople to handle large scale public works, explaining architects and clients "question craftspeople's professionalism, saying they can't cost work efficiently, can't work to a brief, can't draw clear and detailed drawings, can't handle complicated and large contracts, can't collaborate well with the varying groups of people inevitably involved on public projects and can't meet deadlines."[16] Monumentality affects every aspect of the work from spatial and equipment organization to supplies, and time and people management. A challenge for all the Sturdy-Stone ceramicists, including Woolsey and Hardy, was to prove they could address the pitfalls involved in the seepage of monumentality in order to create ornament that would make the Provincial Office Building monumental.

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[15] Reed, 1952, 52.

[16] Martina Margetts, "Rediscovering the Craftworker: the role of craft in architecture," in *Art Within Reach: Artists and Craftworkers, architects and patrons in the making of public art,* ed. Peter Townsend, (London: Thames and Hudson, published by "Art Monthly" in collaboration with the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Crafts Council, 1984), 66.

This chapter follows a chronological order in discussing the making of Woolsey's and Hardy's monumental project, beginning with the principal makers, their interactions, professional influences and particular skills. It then follows the development of the design process, with its implications for the makers and their methods, and the mural and its audiences. Finally it examines the fabrication of the mural through a discussion of skill development and application, adaptive technology, and interpersonal relations involved in this intimate collaboration. The experiences of people, material, and technology are brought together in the story of the physical coming-into-being of this mural, *Untitled*, also known as "the caveman's bible."

Collaboration and Diversity – Painting and Potting

Woolsey and Hardy and the Design

SAB consultant James Ellemers was quite familiar with the work of both Woolsey and Hardy as they were well known within the art and craft communities. Even though he had just recently returned in 1975 from working in Japan as a potter in, Woolsey was active in the SAB's summer arts school as well as in the foundation of the SCC, and Hardy, a young painter was also involved in the SAB summer school. Woolsey and Hardy met in 1976 at the Saskatchewan School of the Arts run by the SAB at "Fort San." Woolsey had been designated a contact person by the SCC in 1976 regarding long range planning for weaving and pottery workshops at "Fort San" and was to submit suggestions to Ellemers.[17] Hardy was painting at the Saskatchewan School of the Arts, working on a series of 22" x 30" landscapes on paper that "had a central horizon with abstract clouds above and colour patterns below."[18] After Ellemers contacted Woolsey regarding the mural commission, Woolsey decided that "because of the scale" he "wanted a visual artist to work with him," and called Hardy whose work he respected. Initially Hardy was quite reluctant to participate in the project, as he had no experience with clay and Woolsey, although he knew the final dimensions and shape of the required mural, was not sure about what he wanted in terms of a design.[19] The two men came from very divergent

[17] "Agenda for Board meeting of SCC Directors," Minutes of the Fourth Board meeting, SCC, May 29, 1976, Battleford Town Office, Book No. 1, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[18] Hardy, email to the author, 9 July 2011; Randy Woolsey telephone interview by the author, Kasama Japan, 12 Aug. 2013.
[19] Gregory Hardy interviewed by the author, Saskatoon, 25 May 2011.

backgrounds, and fusing their individual visions while taking into consideration their different practices took several months of discussion.

Hardy's training had initially been in photography at Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnical Institute 1970-1972. Although he describes himself as a self-taught painter, he attended the Emma Lake workshops in 1973 and 1979-1982, and the Saskatchewan School of the Arts during the summers of 1975 and 1976. [20] As a painter, Hardy follows in the footsteps of the representative landscape painting, exemplified in the works of A.F. Kenderdine of the University of Saskatchewan,[21] a style popular in Saskatchewan before the abstraction of the 1950s and 1960s became dominant through the prominence of the Regina Five. Hardy's landscape representations were critically evaluated as drawing upon mid-century modernist concerns. In a 1976 catalogue for the traveling exhibition, "Changing Visions: the Canadian Landscape," he was referred to as someone who, along with another prairie painter Dorothy Knowles, shared Goodridge Roberts' "special qualities of place and space evoked by a fabric of loose strokes of varying densities."[22] Included in that exhibition was a large format painting *South of Cranberry Flats,"* that proved Hardy, as a young painter, was capable of producing compositions on big canvases; however this was small in comparison to the mural commission.[23] Hardy was also featured on the first page of the 1976 review of the "Changing Visions" traveling national group exhibition in *Arts Magazine*. Reviewers interpreted his work within the lineage of French Impressionism where loose brushstrokes spread "touches of broken colour over the canvas." [24] He was considered one of the young Canadian artists who had integrated "the abstract discoveries of the sixties… into the body of [representational] art in Canada."[25] Through his participation at Emma Lake and "Fort San," as well as his personal and professional connections, Hardy was familiar with the work of a variety of Saskatchewan painters active at the time, such as Dorothy Knowles, William Perehudoff, Eli Bornstein, Terry Fenton, Otto Rogers, and Robert

[20] ArtSask: Artist profiles: Gregory Hardy, accessed 10 July 2012, http://www.artsask.ca/en/artists/greg_hardy; Gregory Hardy, "Biography," *Gregory Hardy*, http://gregoryhardy.com/biography/, accessed 31 April 2011.
[21] *Saskatchewan Art and Artists.* Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery and Regina Public Library Art Gallery, April 2-July 31 1971. See Augustus F. Kenderdine, *North Saskatchewan River*, 1923*,* cat. 85, and *A Day in Summer,* 1935, cat. 87.
[22] Karen Wilkin, "Turning Over a New Leaf," in *Changing Visions: The Canadian Landscape,* curator, Karen Wilkin, (Edmonton: Edmonton Art Gallery and Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1976), np.
[23] Ibid, 24.
[24] Jeanne Parkin, "Changing Visions – The Canadian Landscape," *Art Magazine* 7, no. 25 (March 1976): 8.
[25] James Purdie, "At the Galleries: New Seasons Many Surprises," *The Globe and Mail,* (Saturday Aug.6, 1977): 28.

Christie.[26] Today Hardy refers to his early paintings as "pictographs" with their references to the sun, as well as other "landscape forms…painted with two or three inch house brushes."[27] These pictographs became part of the vocabulary of the east façade mural.

Figure: 32
South of Cranberry Flats, Gregory Hardy, 1976, acrylic on canvas

Hardy agreed to work out some preliminary ideas for Woolsey to consider during the winter of 1976-1977 when he developed several series comprised of many coloured drawings using felt pens and pencil crayon on heavy weight paper. [28] Structuring the trapezoidal space of such a large mural as the Sturdy-Stone Centre commission offered new challenges. One of these was to move from a horizontal format to a vertical one that encouraged the elimination of the horizon line. The various series of sketches he produced for the mural referenced lyrical abstraction, colour field painting, and abstract landscapes in which he was clearly concerned with the relationship between figure and ground, common at the time for many Saskatchewan painters. Hardy indicated that in developing his Sturdy-Stone sketches he had initially been influenced by the abstract painting style he was working in as well as modern Mexican murals.[29] In all of his designs, colour was an important element, and they all depended upon the language

[26] Moppett, "Gregory Hardy, Journeys in the Landscape," 3, 5.
[27] Ibid 5.
[28] For the purpose of this research, Hardy showed the author all his sketches and was invited to choose which ones he would allow to be photographed.
[29] Hardy, 25 May 2011.

of modern abstraction. As Hardy was living in Meacham and Woolsey in Cupar, over two hundred kilometers apart, they could only meet three or four times over the winter to discuss the designs.

Woolsey wanted to "do the piece as freely as possible, which meant there were to be no standard tile sizes, and no repetitions between the tiles, assuring each would be absolutely unique and individual."[30] This philosophy emerged from the working method involved in his vessel production, based on the Japanese pottery philosophy that each object is exceptional although it belongs to a repetitive series, a system closely associated with the production of objects for the Japanese Tea Ceremony with the *Mingei* Movement.[31] Woolsey also particularly remembers the impact of the land on their design search:

> We went out for long walks together. Both of us were Saskatchewan boys and right away we knew it, whatever we did, it would have to be heavily influenced by the land, the landscape, the power of the place… I remember one day, pulling out after a heavy rain and us looking at all the pools of the water puddles as they dried up… the cracked clay…[where] it especially gets to the point where the clay starts to shrink and crack. We went through a period of trying to come up with something using that as an idea.[32]

The two approaches of the collaborators, one closely linked to the tactile and visual stimulation of the clay as earthy material, and the other to visual representations of it only came together after months of exchanges. Communication between Hardy and Woolsey who worked in different media and came from different backgrounds in the arts was challenging. Woolsey had trouble articulating his artistic philosophy he had learned through "osmosis" in Japan,[33] while Hardy approached the problem from his own mural experience that included exposure to painted murals and modern abstract mosaics.

Hardy worked on dozens of sketches over the winter discussing each with Woolsey to understand his aesthetic parameters. His sketches indicate compositional experimentation with the interplay between different colour palettes and arrangements of various-sized geometric forms. One series juxtaposed small spaces of strong bright colours that Woolsey objected to because they were too mosaic-like,[34] and which are, in fact, reminiscent of Winnipeg artist John

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[30] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[31] A discussion about this aspect of Woolsey's work will be fully developed in Chapter 9 of this dissertation, Simplicity of the Rural Scene - A Skilful Philosophy - *Untitled* Tenth Floor Mural, 1981, Randy Woolsey.
[32] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Hardy, 25 May 2011.

Graham's mosaic mural for the Winnipeg International Airport Terminal Building, 1964.[35] Such small tiles closely aligned with commercially-produced ones were inimical with Woolsey's wish to make each tile obviously unique. [36] Several other series also emerged dealing with spirals and large geometric forms. Hardy still considers all these geometric studies as "very design" compared to the focus in his own paintings on brushwork and colour layering. Woolsey was concerned that his mural's tiles reflect studio production that would ensure his authorial stamp and recognition for the work as a professional ceramicist. Mosaics based on these kinds of geometric design elements and designed by painters were part of the integration of art and architecture in the Prairies from the mid-1950s through to the 1960s particularly in Winnipeg, but in Regina as well.[37]

Figure 33: Study for Sturdy-Stone Centre east façade, Gregory Hardy, 1976-77

[35] Bernard Flaman, "Public Art and Canadian Cultural policy: The Airports," in *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives,* ed. Annie Gérin and James S. McLean, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto press, 2009), 84; Mike Fuhmann, "What happened to the art from the old Winnipeg airport terminal?" *CBC Manitoba Scene,* (Wednesday Dec. 7, 2011), accessed 9 Feb. 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/manitoba/scene/other/2011/12/07/what-happened-to-the-art-from-the-old-airport-terminal/.

[36] Hardy, 25 May 2011.

[37] Winnipeg examples include Winnipeg Builder's Exchange mosaic, Takao Tanabe, 1956, Asra Building mosaic, Robert Bruce, 1957, Smith House mosaic, Robert Bruce, 1959, St. Paul's College Chapel, University of Manitoba, Lionel Thomas, 1958, and Gladstone School mosaic, William Enns, 1962. Jeffrey Thorsteinson, "Public Art," (Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, 2013), 6-9, 22, accessed 9 Feb. 2013, http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CD0QFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.winnipegarchitecture.ca%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2013%2F04%2FPublic-Art.pdf&ei=3mfgUZ66Jpew4AOl2oGwCA&usg=AFQjCNGhzqWxpXaUQMuNukrfWgCsU-5QSQ&sig2=C2q5MzrJkxgN_-5EODK-OA&bvm=bv.48705608,d.dmg. Lorraine Malach produced three mosaic panels for Wesley United Church, Regina 1961, Lorraine Malach C.V. Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

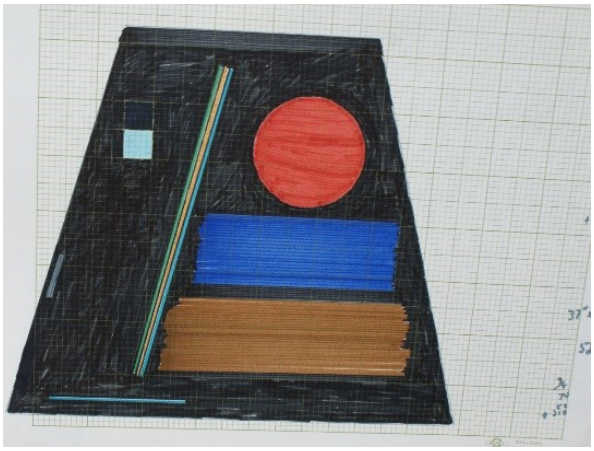

Figure 34: Study for Sturdy-Stone Centre east façade, Gregory Hardy, 1976-77

Figure 35: Study for Sturdy-Stone Centre east façade, Gregory Hardy, 1976-77

Figure 36: Study for Sturdy-Stone Centre east façade, Gregory Hardy, 1976-77

While the translation of a painter's vision into a ceramic tiled surface has certain visual references to mosaics, several factors particularly involved in working relationships set the Sturdy-Stone Centre low relief apart from mosaic work. In mosaics the painter usually has complete control over the design that is laid with pre-determined mosaic tile colours, textures, materials and often sizes, and attribution of the work goes to the designer-painter with the mosaic artist considered the technician. For the Sturdy-Stone mural, approval of the final design lay with Woolsey, the ceramicist, not the designer-painter. When mosaics are laid, the designer-painter usually supervises the work that is executed under his direction and to his specifications. During the fabrication of these ceramic tiles both painter and ceramicist worked together, but under the direction of Woolsey. This can be contrasted with B.C. Binning's involvement in his Vancouver CIBC mural that was assembled from specially cut mosaic tiles according to Binning's specifications. Binning as the original designer still maintained creative control and the mosaic tile company acted according to his directions.[38] However, like Binning, Woolsey and Hardy became aware of the complexities of monumentality where change of scale required particular tile sizes, appropriate textures, and colour patches. Colour, sculptural forms, texture and design movement that have been chosen to all work together on a smaller, intimate dimension, are no longer applicable in a monumental context, or appropriate for a specific space that has particular viewing points. Hardy as designer was not concerned about how his design, or "doodle-sketch" would translate in clay because he had "respect and confidence in Randy as the master of clay [and] felt his general aesthetic in art was in line with [his own]."[39] In the case of this east façade Sturdy-Stone mural, which faces onto 4th Ave North, the direct frontal view is limited by the width of the road and sidewalk, and across the road, the Saskatoon Police Service Building. When the mural was mounted this building had not yet been constructed and there was some concern by the public that it would "block out much dramatizing light before anyone gets accustomed to looking up at art while going to pay a parking ticket."[40] Two trees planted in the sidewalk, one directly in the middle of the mural and one to the left of centre partially obscure the observer's vision of the work. Hardy recounted Woolsey had specifically asked to do the

[38] B.C. Binning, "Mosaics: Vancouver to Venice and Return." *Canadian Art* 15, no.4 (Nov. 1958): 253.
[39] Hardy, 9 July 2011.
[40] Eva Schacherl, "Murals adorn downtown building," *Star-Phoenix (Saskatoon)* (Saturday September 1 1979): 6.

east face of the building because of these pre-existing trees as he wanted nature and art to meld together in line with the Japanese aesthetics in which he had been immersed.[41]

Hardy and Woolsey approached the project from very different angles that had to be first clearly communicated and then reconciled. Hardy's suggestions were framed within the traditional approach to murals he had encountered where the painter's vision was considered the determining factor of the work and the material was not a dominating element; while Woolsey, coming from an Asian pottery background where the discipline was highly honoured, expected the special properties of clay and the ceramic process to be prominently expressed in the final work. Hardy's task was to manipulate the forms and colours of the composition, where his authorial mark could be found, and Woolsey's to maneuver the clay, glazes, and fire, that imprinted his authorship. To arrange this successfully they needed to understand each other's professional context. The exact mechanics of the decision- making process regarding the design were considered at the time to be a private matter worked out in sessions between Hardy and Woolsey. What was emphasized in public was the joint collaboration.[42]

Woolsey finally decided he liked the idea of a yellow sun and a rectangular blue form, and using these as an anchor, Hardy incorporated organic shapes in earthy tones, on a ground. The series that eventually gave rise to the Sturdy-Stone design arose from Woolsey's preference for Hardy's experimentation with coloured abstracts inspired by Otto Rogers, as well as American abstract expressionists Mark Rothko, and Adolf Gottlieb.[43] In the final mural design there are also visual affinities to various works in the touring 1976 exhibition, *Changing Visions – The Canadian Landscape*, in which Hardy had participated. Elements of the final mural design, such as flower stems, birds in flight, the application of linearity, and an aerial view of the prairies are found respectively in *Iceberg,* Paterson Ewen 1974, *As In A Treasure House (First Arctic Series)*, Kay M. Graham 1971, and *Six Prairie Townsites,* Bruce Parson, 1975.[44] These design elements tied the mural, not only to the Saskatchewan modernist painting movement, but also to central Canadian abstraction, and the New York School. The organic forms in earthy tones were closer to what Woolsey had been looking for, and appropriate as Hardy explains Woolsey was

[41] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[42] Garry Palecek email to the author, 2 June 2014.
[43] Moppett, "Gregory Hardy, Journeys in the Landscape," 5.
[44] Wilkin, 30, 32, 42.

"tied to the earth;"[45] they also more closely adhered to Hardy's own painting style that involved organic forms unrelated to geometric design. The final series of studies began with similar-sized light-toned organic shapes evenly dispersed over large closely related neutral colour fields. This was a marked difference from the previous geometric series where organic shapes moved through narrow horizontal lines.

Figure 37: Study for Sturdy-Stone Centre east façade, Gregory Hardy, 1977

After presenting several of these sketches to Woolsey, Hardy finally submitted a doodle on a piece of newsprint in orange and blue that Woolsey agreed should be explored further.[46] In this sketch, darker organic objects float on a background divided into two layers where three very large shaded forms, circular, rectangular and L-shaped, overlay the paler background. By the time the design had been finalized and colours added, the background tones was darker than the three larger forms that retained their original shapes and placement, while the smaller irregular shapes became more varied in shape, size and tonality. In the actual mural, the idea of layering is achieved through the overlay of the forms rather than with colour strength as

[45] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[46] Ibid.

suggested in a sketch. In a reference to the building itself, Hardy incorporated the angle of the parking ramp. The yellow sun was realized as the large yellow shape on the right, while the blue background rectangular shape was interpreted as a lake, and the brown/blue background referenced the earth. In the final mounted work these organic elements of the mural are intermingled with the grid structure of the tiles that cut through them, evoking what Rosemary Donegan explains is the importance of the grid in prairie history.

> Conceptually, the grid allowed European settlers to take control of the landscape without dealing with the specificity of the local geography or the natural vegetation. Farms and towns were developed in a manner that ignored traditional settlement patterns and trading and transportation routes, thus erasing centuries old understanding and use of the land by native peoples, who were in the process of being confined to the reserves.[47]

This metaphor, based as it is on a ceramic-dependent structural requirement, would not have been evident to the committee when the final proposal was submitted, which Hardy remembers consisted of a "pretty loose" drawing two feet across at the base and three feet high and proportional. [48]

The final design was abstract enough that image distortion would not be an issue. In fact the design fractured the idea of a stable viewing point in several ways. With its low relief background, the colours are altered in different daylight effects from warm, subtle blue browns to a variety of blues. This shift means that at times, when the viewer glances upwards or even obliquely at the tiles, the impression of looking at forms against the sky, suggested by birds and the sun, changes to looking at earth forms from the sky, such as birds flying below and silhouetted against the earth. This instability is compounded by the flower figures against the background that imply an intimate encounter, and simultaneous visions of irregular coloured shapes against the regularly shaped tiles evoking a prairie landscape from the sky. There is no clearly demarcated earth and sky or even implied horizon: we are stimulated by constantly shifting viewpoints brought on by variable light conditions on a sturdy stone building.

Once Woolsey and Hardy had agreed on this pictographic design they had to produce a maquette for architectural approval. The maquette required a great deal of improvisation for Woolsey who did not, as yet, have a working kiln. He assembled some bricks and mounted them

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[47] Rosemary Donegan, *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan*, May 21-July 26 1991, (Regina Sask.: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1991), 9.
[48] Hardy, 25 May 2011.

on plywood for a maquette about eighteen inches high.[49] While a review of the mural mentions they "went through hundreds of clay models, trying to visualize what the final product would look like when blown up to cover about 3,000 square feet,"[50] a more accurate statement would be "hundreds of drawings." Woolsey cannot recall how colours were represented in this brick maquette, but does remember they did not accurately represent the final mural's colours.[51] When the mural design was submitted, it encountered resistance from Roger Walls, the lead architect, whose negative opinion was outnumbered by the other committee members.[52] Hardy assumed that, as the designer, his part in the mural process was completed, and he could leave the project in the capable hands of Woolsey who had extensive experience with clay.[53] This was not to happen.

Woolsey, a few years older than Hardy, had studied science at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon 1961-1963, but after working his way around the world moved to Japan in 1968, where he discovered pottery. He subsequently began to study it by complete immersion that included an apprenticeship.[54] Following this period, Woolsey constructed his own studio and wood-fired kilns, and in the traditional Japanese manner worked with available local clay "more for reasons of tradition, intimacy and roots than because of simple availability."[55] He was very prolific and successful as a young Western potter in Japan, participating in five solo exhibitions and fifteen group exhibitions between 1971 and 1975 before finally returning to Saskatchewan.[56] Trained within a modern interpretation of the Japanese *Mingei* movement Woolsey brought to the Saskatchewan ceramics scene an "authentic" Japanese pottery experience. He felt potters could profit from using local clays rather than relying upon commercially prepared ones, and added quartz to the clay he purchased for his functional work in an attempt to replicate the natural rough local Japanese clay with which he was most familiar. While Woolsey had informally studied many ceramic periods, which he enumerated as "Greek, Celtic, Chinese, Old English, Korean, German, New England, Central American, Japanese folk

[49] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[50] Schacherl, 6.
[51] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[52] Hardy, 25 May 2011
[53] Ibid.
[54] Randy Woolsey telephone interview by the author, Kasama Japan, 6 Nov. 2013.
[55] Charles W. Watrall, "Randy Woolsey: Seeing and Being Able to Consider 'Life' in a Pot is Neither Easy nor Easily Defined.," *Arts West* 2, no.5, (Sept/Oct.1977): 21-22.
[56] Randy Woolsey, "Artist Statement," *Randy Woolsey: Recent Work,"* (Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1982).

pottery and tea-ware," he felt "Korean and Japanese traditions…had the most influence on [his] work." An important part of this tradition encompassed the firings, techniques, and tools.

Wood firing is notorious as being one of the most difficult techniques to master for high firings. Experience with this was rare in Saskatchewan,[57] and success even more so, lending prestige to Woolsey's professionalism. As part of his preference for the Japanese Tea Ceremony objects, Woolsey specialized in a limited range of functional objects, especially bowls and vases, which he described as "my obsessions."[58] He was also passionate about the interaction of the fire on the pots in the kiln, and when he loaded the kiln he was constantly thinking about the flow of the fire. "For every piece that goes in, I imagine how the fire is going to squirt off it, how it is going to deflect, how it is going to move after it hits that piece, what will work compatibly with the fire in a certain part of the kiln." At the time of these comments in 1982, Woolsey principally worked with a wood-fired kiln and relied on the calculated accidental effects from the deposit of wood ash and sometimes salt.[59] Woolsey's preference for such spontaneous effects of the processes inherent in wood firing on a limited range of functional vessels is evident in his design decision to make every tile unique, but his ultimate decision to fire with gas recognized the unpredictability of wood for large-scale projects. Although he had briefly encountered mural work through the experience of his former teacher, Koji Nakano,[60] to complete the Sturdy-Stone commission required a firing aesthetic removed from his previous experience in Japan. In contrast to how he preferred to work, the mural required calculated design, colour, and textural consistency across a great number of tiles, and measured control of all extraneous factors. There was little room in the mural project for the type of surprises that involved the ash and salt deposits Woolsey favoured in a wood-fired kiln, or for the luxury of being able to prefer "one piece in fifty."[61] Every tile had to be full of life and unique, but form a seamless part of a unit; in fact this was accomplished.[62]

Much of what was involved in the Sturdy-Stone mural project was thus alien to both Woolsey and Hardy in terms of their own personal practices and visions. Neither had ever been

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[57] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[58] Woolsey, "Artist Statement," 1982.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals: Outside" Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly*, 3, Box 5, 5/16 Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[61] Woolsey, "Artist Statement,"1982.
[62] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.

involved with such a large commission that would consume so many months of their time. What they both did have was energy, youth, a sense of adventure, the experience of positive rewards from other bold career decisions, and as mostly self-taught artists, an ability to creatively solve problems.

Mural Making

The exterior nature of the mural required a waterproof ceramic surface. One of Woolsey's first tasks was to identify an appropriate clay body that would withstand the weather, be suitable for thick tiles, have the right colour in terms of affecting the glaze colours, be appropriately plastic, and be economically available in the quantity required. The expertise of the ceramic engineer of Plainsman Clay, Medicine Hat Alberta, was invaluable in this matter.[63] In 1976 the manager of Plainsman Clay, John Porter, a studio potter himself, had approached ceramic teacher Jack Sures about marketing their clay to Saskatchewan's professional studio potters.[64] By facilitating the Sturdy-Stone projects the company proved its expertise in the field and its worth to the studio pottery community of Saskatchewan. Plainsman analyzed several clay bodies for Woolsey, looking at density, shrinkage, compression resistance, and fired colour. Woolsey recalls "instinctively" deciding on a light-coloured stoneware body that could be fired to cone 6 (about 1225°c), with thirty per cent added grog.[65] Thirty-five tons of clay were purchased as a special order to assure product consistency.[66] If he had used a high-fired clay, too much grog would have been required for the thickness of the slabs, which would have compromised their integrity due to increased porosity. This light-coloured clay body ensured the glaze colours would not be muddied. The clay and grog were mixed together in a recently purchased clay mixer based on a bread dough mixing design.[67] These procedures were a marked divergence for Woolsey regarding interactions with industry, technical requirements, and machinery. Trained in Japanese practices, Woolsey had always worked with local clays, respecting their own plastic qualities and firing temperatures rather than trying to formulate a

[63] Letter from John Porter manager of Plainsman Clay 20 July 1977 to Jack Sures, Box 10 File 165: Finances: Supplies and Materials, 1965-1978, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[64] Letter from John Porter manager of Plainsman Clay 22 Oct. 1976 to Jack Sures, Box 10 File 165: Finances: Supplies and Materials, 1965-1978, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[65] Hardy, 25 May 2011; Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[66] Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 29.
[67]Palecek, 26; Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.

specific body to perform the way he wanted, mixing these by hand for small scale objects. In contrast to architectural tiles, he was used to understanding clay objects in relation to an interaction with them on an intimate scale, involving a variety of senses such as taste and touch, with an awareness of textures, weight, and shape, as well as colour.

The massiveness of the project resulted in the implication of more people, as monumentality requires enormous amounts of reliable raw materials and a particular working site, but also appropriately skilled labour. Hardy realized he continued to be invaluable to the project that was evidently too physically and organizationally big for one person. The intense work schedule of sixteen-hour days forced Hardy to make the difficult decision to practically abandon painting during this time when he was only able to produce a few small works.[68] Some of the other project participants came from the Cupar area and others from unexpected places. The mural benefited from help offered by a local farmer, a retired schoolteacher, Randy Woolsey's father who had a cabinet business, his younger brother, and a welder.[69] Skilled clay labour also arrived from Japan, friends Woolsey had made while potting in Kasama. One of these was stone sculptor Masayuki Nagase, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts, Tokyo, 1971, who had undertaken a stone carving apprenticeship in Kasama, an area known for its quarries.[70] Nagase, who was at a Texas symposium, was convinced by Woolsey to help with the mural project for a while.[71] The most skilled clay worker was Garry Palecek from Vancouver, who had also met Woolsey in Kasama. Palecek had first heard of Woolsey while he was visiting Hawaii, where Woolsey's reputation as a successful Canadian potter studying and working in Japan had reached a Japanese ceramic gallery. Like many pottery enthusiasts from North America, Palecek became a pottery apprentice, in this case at Kasama's Kuno Toen pottery. He worked there for one year while studying with Woolsey on his days off; the following year he worked fulltime for Woolsey, helping him with his wood-fired salt glaze kiln.[72] Palecek returned to Vancouver five months before Woolsey returned to Saskatchewan, and established his own

[68] Karen Wilkin, "Gregory Hardy – Paintings 1984-1989, Mendel Art Gallery, 2001, Gregory Hardy: Essays and Publications, accessed 10 July 2013, http://gregoryhardy.com/essays-publications/gregory-hardy-paintings-1984-1989/.
[69] Hardy, 25 May 2011; Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[70] Masayuki Nagase, "Artist: resume," *Masayuki Nagase, Earth, Water, Wind,* accessed 14 Aug. 2013, http://www.mnagase.com/artist/artist_resume.html; Randy Woolsey telephone interview by the author, Kasama Japan, 12 Aug. 2013.
[71] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[72] Garry Palecek email to the author 11 June 2014.

pottery until he became involved with the mural he has called "the 'Clay Wall Project.'"[73] Among their jobs was to mix the tons of clay required for the mural, and Palecek worked late into the autumn until the mural was finished.[74] Both Hardy and Woolsey emphasized they paid their workers "a living wage," as their contribution was essential to the success of the mural, and that in comparison, their own hourly wages were negligible.[75]

As Woolsey was firm about his commitment to make the mural in one piece, a suitable location for fabrication was crucial, a challenge that falls into the working parameters involved in the seepage of monumentality. Today he attributes "any power and immediacy the mural might have to a viewer" to the fact that it was "all done – as a unit."[76] Cupar, a small prairie town where Woolsey was living with his young family, was the preferred location to fabricate the mural, as this was his hometown. The community arranged for him to rent the rink for four months over the summer, as long as he was out before the next season began.[77] This permitted enough time to lay out the clay slabs, fabricate the surface treatment, and cut and dry the mural prior to firing, a four to five month long project. The project was successfully completed, although barely, in the late autumn. In May 1977 the transformation of the rink for this project began. Woolsey and Hardy laid a plywood platform consisting of two hundred and forty sheets covering over 5,000 square feet onto a level gravel surface.[78] This platform had been cut to scale taking into consideration the shrinkage of the clay so it was larger than the finished mural. Onto this plywood surface silica sand was sprinkled to prevent the clay from sticking to it, which could cause cracking.[79]

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[73] Palecek email, 11 June 2014.
[74] Palecek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 27.
[75] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013. They did not stipulate what wages were paid, but the minimum wage was $7.00 an hour at that time in Saskatchewan.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[78] Caroline Heath, "Saskatchewan Artists for Sturdy-Stone," *Saskatchewan Arts Board* 2, no. 3 (Winter 1980): 6; Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals: Outside" 4, Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly*, 2. Box 5, 2005-53 S516 Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[79] Saskatchewan Government Services, *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Government Services, 1979), 18. Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

Figure 38: Determining an appropriate base on which to lay the clay

Figure 39: The Brent model slab roller in action

Figure 40: Joining the rectangular slabs of clay together using foot pressure

Hardy describes their work methods as "very disciplined," starting early and keeping regular, mostly sixteen hours days. [80] This work ethic certainly contrasted with some of the stereotypes of the time, involving free-spirited and undisciplined artists and potters engaged in alternative lifestyles. For Hardy the collaborative method of working on the mural was much like film-making, with everyone contributing their expertise and playing their roles under the orders of a director. He saw the technical procedures as the most important and the beginning of a "personal adventure together" for himself and Woolsey. The actual processes involved with manoeuvring the clay were intricate, and demanded much physical strength, endurance and inventiveness. Woolsey purchased a new slab roller to create the 400, eighteen by forty-two by

[80] Hardy, 25 May 2011; Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 27.

one-inch clay slabs needed to cover the plywood surface from the tonnes of prepared clay,[81] which were placed onto the plywood and joined by foot where they abutted to create a solid uniform surface.[82] A string grid was laid out to facilitate the transfer of the design from paper, and the clay slab was covered with newspaper and plastic to control the rate of moisture loss.[83]

Background patterns were imprinted into the clay by means of a metal lawn roller consisting of a forty-five gallon water-filled drum with handles. The outside of the drum was fitted with "random chunks" of combine belts that formed the imprinted pattern, and the imprinting was done in a manner to create converging and diverging waving lines that "would catch the sun in its path across the southern sky."[84] Positive shapes resulting from this manoeuvre are between one and four times the width of the depressed combine belt marks and form curvilinear rectangular polygons. Relief areas for the "floating" forms were loosely blocked on the mural surface with toilet paper, as it "stood out against the colour of the clay and was malleable, and cheap and light, and easy to move."[85] These were created by adding onto the base slabs another slab layer that was then "pummelled" "with a variety of wooden and stone clubs."[86] As this process required walking on the clay bed, three-inch foam "space boots" were constructed so that footprints would not appear on the wet clay.[87] The new challenges encountered through the work processes were resolved with inexpensive and available materials, taking into account the flexibility and fragility of the wet clay. Ingold aptly calls this improvisation, as it "characterizes creativity by way of its processes," rather than "innovation" that evaluates creativity "by way of its results."[88]

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[81] Palecek, "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada, 29.
[82] Hardy, 25 May 2011. See also *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 18.
[83] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals: Outside" 4, Unpublished Manuscript
[84] Ibid, 5.
[85] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[86] Palacek, "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 29.
[87] Ibid, 27.
[88] Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam, "Creativity and Cultural Improvisation: An Introduction," in *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation,* eds. Tim Ingold and Elizabeth Hallam, (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2000), 2.

Figure 41: Hardy on ladder directing Woolsey where to place the design elements on the string-grid clay surface.

Figure 42: Woolsey laying toilet paper to form circumference of design elements

At all stages the challenge was to view this large surface to determine how the execution of the drawn design was actually proceeding in the required scale and in clay. Some concerns would be the depth of the imprinting, the height of the relief, the final placing of the relief areas, and the activation of the large areas of space with enough detail, but not too much. It would be difficult to judge this from the ground or from the seats at the side of the rink surface because of perspective problems. In order to approximate the Sturdy-Stone's audience viewpoint, tall ladders were built that Woolsey and Hardy could mount to approximate the experience of viewing the mural on the wall from the pavement. It was impossible, however, from within an arena under artificial lighting to simulate the shifting light and atmospheric conditions of the actual wall.

Textures on many of these larger relief surfaces resemble a multiplicity of closely packed and random craters, while others surfaces are formed by rolling to create almost parallel ridges. The sun motif with its rectangular rays imprinted into the clay surface was formed through impressing the flat and end sides of two inch by four inch boards,[89] a readily accessible building material, into the surface of the clay which not only created the texture and motif, but also increased adherence of the relief slabs to the base. Each relief area had its own particular texture, assuring variability in the surface.[90] These treatments accentuate the play of light and cast shadow involved with relief sculpture that "creates a lot more drama" as Hardy pointed out in a 1979 interview. He elaborated: "If you look at it early in the morning and late in the evening it is two different pieces."[91] Low relief texture becomes particularly exciting because of changing light when the sun's angle is low and cast shadows are long. Some of the smaller, round, applied reliefs recall flower petals or early multi-celled life forms, while the narrower ones have a much more subtle ridging. The larger coloured background shapes, roughly a circle, square and "L" were differentiated through various shades of slip rather than added relief. Each form displays individual textural and colour treatment.

As the difference in thickness of the tiles ranged from one to three inches, warpage and cracking and controlled shrinkage were critical concerns. Luckily the summer was cool and humid, slowing down the drying process and limiting problems with cracking and warping.

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[89] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[90] Palecek, letter to the author, 18 June 2014.
[91] Schacherl, 6.

Unfortunately the rink roof leaked and Woolsey and Hardy had to scramble to erect a plastic tent to protect their work-in-progress where uneven drying and wet spots could compromise the structural integrity of the slabs.[92] Aside from the roof leaking, Woolsey is convinced that their successful completion of the mural can be attributed largely to this unusual Saskatchewan weather, which he remembers as "one of the wettest summers and falls in Saskatchewan for many, many years."[93]

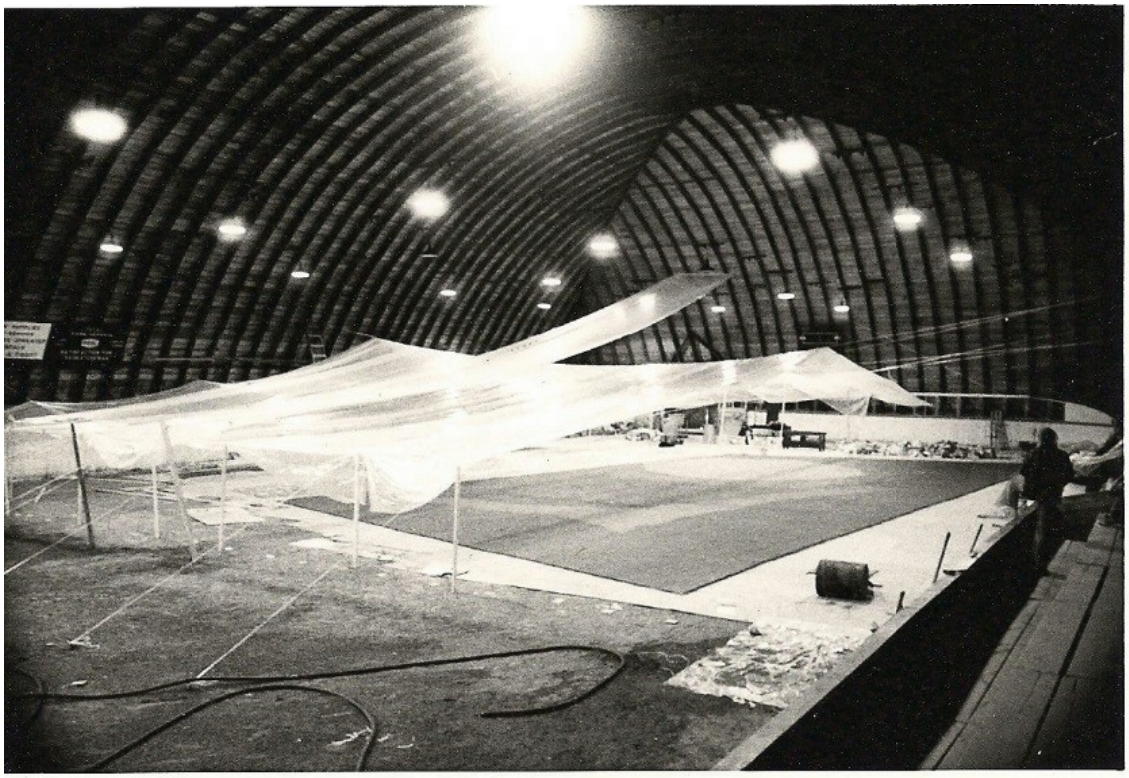

Figure 43: The plastic tent installed in the arena because of the leaking roof

[92] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[93] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.

Figure 44: Woolsey wearing foam boots and cutting the tiles with a modified lawn mower. Note the various textures unique for each design element and the foam boots

The mural was cut into nine by twelve inch rectangular tiles using a grid system marked by twine. A local welder was instrumental in modifying a lawn mower so that its circular saw blades could cut three feet at a time. The total cutting involved pushing the device for five kilometres up and down the rows.[94] Concerns that arose during the two-day meeting with all mural participants in the autumn of 1977 regarding attachment of the eight-pound tiles spurred a visit from the masonry contractor. Jake Ketler suggested every tile needed to be scored and a notch drilled at the top and bottom of each to accommodate the galvanized metal clips necessary in the mounting,[95] a process requiring great care as the tiles were still unfired and necessitating an unexpected 600 hours of labour.[96] This could be seen as an example of the breakdown in communication among the architect, contractor, and artist that has been bemoaned by writers such as Anita Aarons and contributors to the British Art Council and Craft Council 1984 publication. However, the uniqueness of this project without precedent in Canada meant that all who were involved were solving problems on the spot as needed.

[94] Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 29.
[95] Jake Ketler interview with the author 26 May 2011
[96] Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 27.

Figure 45: The portable tile scoring and notching station, October 1977

Figure 46: Woolsey drilling notches into each tile

The cut and notched tiles dried just in time for the rink to be returned to the town in late autumn.[97] Only one firing was to be done, without bisqueing, a decision related to time, economics, and steeped in Asian traditions. Before the tiles were moved from the rink, Woolsey and Hardy painted onto them the four coloured clay slips formulated for reduction firing, the multiple low-fired commercial engobes, stoneware commercial glazes, and a copper red glaze.[98] Because this stage was crucial, as difference in thickness of slips or glazes would impact on the final fired colour, Woolsey had undertaken many glaze experiments to narrow down the twenty-three different colour applications he finally used.[99] Hardy was familiar with the manipulation of wide house brushes as he was using them in his paintings;[100] however the difference in consistencies between paints, and the ceramic colourants meant that Hardy did have to adapt his application technique to these new materials. The glazing process was not a simple transference of gesture, requiring translations of techniques from one medium to another. Success of the subtle colours indicates a consummate knowledge of oxide blending, slip, engobe and glaze layering, and brushwork techniques to create the mutually compatible range of earthy shades. When totally dry, the tiles, carefully numbered, were packed by fours or fives in specially ordered cardboard boxes and trucked to Woolsey's parents'two-car garage for firing. [101]

Figure 47: Woolsey labelling each tile as it was packed

[97] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[98] Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 29; Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[99] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013; Schacherl, 6.
[100] Moppett, "Gregory Hardy, Journeys in the Landscape," 5.
[101] Gregory Hardy email to the author 4 Aug. 2012; Hardy, 25 May 2011.

The adaptation of building materials, farm and lawn equipment by Woolsey and those who worked with him contribute to the co-constitution of identities and the formation of groups. The innovative pioneering community spirit associated with rural Saskatchewan is literally embedded in the clay within the composition of this modernist mural. The constant movement between awareness of the clay material and local tools and machinery because of previous skilled encounters, facilitated the process of "coming to mind" and the improvisations required to solve the design or tool deficiency. Aspects of all the adapted machines or their parts arise from features of their original function; part of that original function is translated into another purpose. The forty-five gallon water-filled drum lawn roller, already a homemade device, was further altered with the attached combine belts; this drum technology was a logical choice at it flattened earth and therefore could work on clay, a kind of soil. The combine belts already operating in a circular motion on the combines, were available as scrap material, complex enough for visual interest, not too thick as to create deep grooves, and their pattern impression and width were visually familiar to the province's population most of whom had farming roots. The quality of foam as flexible, thick, cheap, and easy to cut made it a reasonable choice to protect the clay surface from definable footprints. The lawn mower adaptation to cut the clay into regular tiles took advantage of its circular movement and its cutting action, brought together in a different way with circular saw blades, and was also handy in a rural community. This idea was combined with the idea of orderly rows created by the plough. Even toilet paper became valued because of its portability, affordability and flexibility. In all these instances essential aspects of the original tools were retained and adapted.

Kiln technology was another concern for Woolsey. A kiln was needed that would conform to safety norms in a town setting and be fuelled by natural gas, readily available in the area. It had to be designed for efficient loading and unloading as it would be consistently and regularly fired over the winter months in a garage. He turned to the four-burner "Minnesota Flat Top" car kiln. This kiln had recently been created by Lou Nils, who first published his design in the 1976 summer issue of a highly respected, trade journal geared to professional ceramicists and potters, *Studio Potter*. The kiln was radical at the time as it contravened accepted wisdom about the need for rounded tops, either sprung arch, domed, or beehive. The movement of the fire within a rectangular volume would be quite different from one arched, rounded one, already familiar to Woolsey, and to turn to such a new untested tool for such a monumental project was a

major risk. The kiln also challenged experts who doubted the efficacy of its small flue port. In fact the Minnesota Flat Top was designed for extreme cold weather firing, ideal for a prairie winter.[102] Although detailed instructions were provided in the article, Woolsey contacted Nils for reassurance.[103] The kiln required specific firebricks that were available from Claybank, and therefore a local product; sixty kiln shelves suitable for the stoneware firing temperature were also purchased. Although constant use caused them to warp halfway through the firing process, Woolsey and Hardy just "flipped them over" and kept going until the 5500 tiles were fired. [104] Woolsey fired the kiln "about fifty-five times" in "two- day cycles," explaining he "got it [the firing process] down to about fourteen hours, and then cooling, take them out, slide them back on again. We didn't have to take the shelves out you see because the tiles would slide in [because it was a car kiln on tracks]."[105] The firings consumed Woolsey and Hardy for five months during the entire winter of 1977-78. Hardy recalls this part of the process as particularly tedious,[106] as he was a painter used to immediate colour results.

Despite the need for some control, Woolsey still liked the idea of allowing the fire to make its own mark, "to do its own thing,"[107] and so paradoxically achieved this through the manipulation of oxidation and reduction atmospheres in the kiln. This allowed for colour variation in the slips, engobes and glazes, which greatly enhanced the interplay of forms and colours that enliven the relief surface. The interaction of slips with various kinds of matt, semi-matt or glossy glazes, which in the latter case could be transparent or opaque, results in a complex visual depth created through chromatic layers. Woolsey is still amazed at the colours that resulted, especially the copper reds, notoriously difficult to control, that touched thirty rows of tiles and involved half the firings.[108] The successful colour results were partially attributable to the numbering of the tiles from bottom to top so that they were systematically fired, one-hundred square feet at a time,[109] assuring some stability and continuity in the gas firings. This achievement is even more impressive when seasonal changes are taken into consideration, ranging from the moderate conditions of fall and spring to the extreme cold of Prairie winters.

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[102] Nils Lou, "The Minnesota Flat Top, *Studio Potter* 5, no. 1, (Summer 1976): 64, 66-68.
[103] Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 26, 29.
[104] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[109] Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 29.

Because of the necessity of firing a few tiles, and the impossibility of laying them all out together in an available space, Woolsey and Hardy had no means of immediate feedback. Their only accommodation for error was to produce a few extra tiles that could be enlisted as replacements if necessary, although their fear in such a case was that the slight variations of texture and colour in such a tile would be amplified when introduced into the larger pattern. They were prepared to accept whatever the result would be when the firing schedule was completed and the work was eventually mounted.[110]

Figure 48: Mural tile test fired showing slips and glazes with notch for metal strapping

When Ketler mounted the mural during a six-week period in the spring of 1979 he made sure to hire Woolsey and Hardy as assistants,[111] and this was the only part of the project from which they earned a salary.[112] Their job was to ensure the tiles were mounted in the correct order

[110] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[111] Jake Ketler archives, private collection. Ketler, 26 May 2011.
[112] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.

and they personally passed the individual tiles to the masons, checking to confirm their inscribed numbers. Woolsey remembers Ketler's surprise at the excellent fit of all the tiles.[113] To help support the weight of the mural, Ketler also had to insert two steel bars across the façade about one-third from the bottom and one-third from the top for reinforcement. This gap is visible as a three quarter to five-eighths inch line of grout. The brown grout Ketler used corresponded to the shades of brown in the background colour diminishing visual interference that would negatively impact upon the design.[114] After about fifteen years, Ketler had to temporarily remove two rows of the tiles in order to fix a leaking "cold joint." The "cold joint" was attributed to a parkade problem arising from water running between the exterior concrete surface and the tile that was tied in with the freeze/thaw cycles. Ketler emphasized the cause of the leakage problem was not related to errors in the mural construction or its mounting procedures, [115] thereby affirming the professionalism of himself, Masonry Contractors Ltd. and Woolsey and Hardy.

Woolsey and Hardy did not see their work completed in one piece until the scaffolding was removed. Their only concern was the "'buff sun' was a little too strong," and they would have preferred something slightly more subtle.[116] The translation of the original drawing into the final textured and glazed mural indicates Woolsey's intimate knowledge of the properties of clay and its interaction with glaze at a level where he could both create and exploit aesthetic effects and be guided in his aesthetic decisions through his ability to manage his materials and technology. Woolsey and Hardy were paid in instalments during the process, a situation that necessitated careful management of their funds to cover living costs, equipment purchases, payment to labourers, and raw materials. The total project cost the government about sixty-thousand dollars,[117] money that allowed Woolsey to buy the new five-thousand dollar gas kiln and slab roller and Hardy a five-thousand dollar truck, both required for the project, as well as pay labour wages, living expenses and raw materials. Woolsey and Hardy currently both express their satisfaction with the mural.[118]

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[113] Woolsey, 12 Aug. 2013.
[114] Hardy, 25 May 2011; Ketler, 26 May 2011.
[115] A cold joint is a weakness in concrete that is sometimes formed when one layer is added to another without the proper mixing or compression especially when the first layer has already started to set. The Concrete Society, Cold Joints, accessed 31 July 2012, http://www.concrete.org.uk/services/fingertips_nuggets.asp?cmd=display&id=372; Ketler, 26 May 2011.
[116] Hardy, 9 July 2011.
[117] Hardy, 25 May 2011; Palacek "'On the Way to the Mural' A clay wall project in Canada," 25.
[118] Randy Woolsey email to the author 7 June 2011; Hardy, 9 July 2012.

Figure 49: L to R: Unidentified worker, Jake Ketler, Greg Hardy and Randy Woolsey mounting the mural, Spring 1979

Mural Afterlife

When the mural was terminated Woolsey and Hardy parted ways. After a year and a half of close collaboration, Hardy said, "that's a big chunk of your life…it's done things to us."[119] The murals however, paved the way for both Woolsey and Hardy to receive recognition and further financial reward through the Saskatchewan Arts Board senior grants worth to each of them, $10,000 in 1983.[120] Hardy briefly moved to Halifax with his new wife where he worked on the docks and returned to his primary interest, landscape painting.[121] Hardy has an established reputation as a painter with regular solo and group exhibitions and works in major Canadian and

[119] Scharcherl, 6.
[120] Peggy Forde, "Sturdy-Stone Murals: Abstract to Concrete," *The Craft Factor* 8, no.3, (Summer 1983): 3; email from Noreen Neu SAB to the author, 19 Aug. 2013.
[121] Hardy, 25 May 2011.

American corporate and public collections. He currently lives in Saskatchewan and continues to paint landscapes from his studio.[122] Subsequently the mural period of his career was framed within a catalogue essay of his paintings as "disturbing," and the series of small watercolours he produced during the winter of 1978 in Cupar were interpreted as "a reaction "against the restrictions imposed by the site and materials of the ceramic project." The writer's refusal to acknowledge this period as creatively productive for Hardy is clearly emphasized elsewhere in her essay when the question of pictographs in his work arises. In the summer of 1978 Hardy encountered Adolph Gotlieb's Pictographs of the 1940s in Toronto that intrigued him. His attention was drawn to them because he had already been thinking about the form and meaning of hieroglyphics, an interest that cannot be disassociated from his mural experience that entailed making marks in clay to create "the caveman's bible."[123] The writer's refusal to acknowledge the importance of the mural project in this traditional approach to the stylistic development in Hardy's oeuvre signals the entrenched hierarchical separation of mediums that still dominates current art discourse.

Woolsey relocated to Ruddell Saskatchewan, a small rural community between Saskatoon and North Battleford where he built a home, pottery studio, a salt kiln and a textile studio for his wife, Yoshimi Nishi. He was very active in the SCC and returned to his primary focus of functional pottery within the Japanese high fire and salt-glazing traditions that he had previously practiced in Japan. Through his involvement with the SCC, Woolsey worked closely with James Ellemers in 1980 to promote the value of the integration of the arts and architecture to the government, particularly in regards to both the Sturdy-Stone Centre and the T.C. Douglas Building, the major government building projects undertaken by this administration. Of particular concern to Woolsey, was that the crafts council and craft practitioners would not be forgotten. His work earned him a merit award from the SCC in 1980.[124] Woolsey also went on to submit a mural design for the second round of mural commissions in 1981.[125] Despite the long hours under stressful conditions Woolsey and Hardy mutually respected one another and are still

[122] Hardy 25 May 2011; Gregory Hardy, "Biography," *GregoryHardy,* http://gregoryhardy.com/biography/.
[123] Wilkin, "Gregory Hardy: Paintings 1984-1989."
[124] "Connie Talbot-Parker, Exhibitions Report," Annual General Meeting 1979-80 Forth San Saskatchewan, Oct. 26, 1980, Book 5 Saskatchewan Council Archives
[125] This mural will be addressed in Chapter 9 of this dissertation, "Simplicity of the Rural Scene - A Skilful Philosophy: *Untitled* Tenth Floor Mural, 1981, Randy Woolsey".

in contact.[126] In his current studio in Kasama Japan, Woolsey has recently made a framed stoneware tile, *Memories of Greg No.1* using high-fired reduction techniques that reference both Hardy's prairie landscape paintings with the low horizon line, and a few of the later designs for the Sturdy-Stone Centre mural.[127]

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the collaboration involved in the coming-into-being of "the caveman's bible" was dependent upon and contributed to several different kinds of group formations, among them the categories of professional ceramics and the allied arts, as well as the SCC, the SAB and the NDP government. Both Woolsey and Hardy brought to the project extensive experience in their individual fields of pottery and painting, reflective of the professional status of their disciplines. Woolsey's training and subsequent success in Japan, arguably the country in the world where professional ceramicists were most highly regarded, added to the professionalism of the mural that in turn legitimized professional ceramics in Saskatchewan. This Japanese training was essential to his being perceived as competent enough to handle this commission, and was central to his ability to gather people together and organise the workplace and workforce. In this way, his very training must be viewed as an agent within the network of associations arising from this mural project for the Sturdy-Stone Centre. Woolsey's determination to leave his authorial stamp as a ceramicist in and on the mural assured high visibility for his profession within Saskatchewan, and therefore the concept of "authorship" and "artistic intention" interacted with the design and making processes and the idea of collaboration, emerging from interfaces between materials and makers, establishing a network of agents.

Due to the lack of national organizational coherence of Canadian professional ceramics the mural did not receive national Canadian or American publicity at the time of its making in North America. However, Palecek's 1983 article about the experience for *Pottery in Australia* assured the mural promoted Canadian professional ceramics to at least a limited international audience. Palecek followed up on this article with a 1985 conference presentation, "Designing

[126] Hardy, 25 May 2011.
[127] Randy Woolsey Pottery, "photo gallery," accessed 7 June 2011, http://randywoolseypottery.weebly.com/photo-gallery.html

and Tackling a Public Commission." While this National Ceramic Conference paper did not specifically mention the Sturdy-Stone mural, the issues that informed its making were evident in the paper's content.[128] On a provincial level, Woolsey's implication within the SCC furthered this new organization's mandate to represent professional craftspeople in Saskatchewan and increased its profile. However, after Woolsey returned to Japan in 1989, the mural's attachment to him waned because he was no longer closely involved with the provincial arts and craft communities. Different dynamics were involved in Hardy's professional relationship with the mural. Because of the collaborative nature of the project, Hardy's implication was more complex as he came form a painting background where the authorial stamp is tied to individual production. Hardy's painting career was temporarily held back by this foray into ceramic mural work that removed him from the exhibition circuit for eighteen months. This year and a half collaboration has been glossed over as "disturbing" to his professional life and its importance has gone unrecognized, a situation that indicates the difficulties of traditional approaches in art discourse to adequately contextualize the collaborative nature of the Applied Arts in actual professional practice. Hardy's participation did increase the profile of Saskatchewan's modern abstract art community, cementing its legitimacy as prominent "official" public art on a highly visible government building.

As an agent the mural reinforced the professionalism of the painting, ceramic and craft communities, and promoted "made in Saskatchewan" Applied Art projects. Because of this it advertised the SAB as taste masters, organizers, and mediators between the art community and the government. The mural-making acted as an agent to bring together a workforce and technologies from Japan, Vancouver, Minnesota, Alberta and Saskatchewan, which critique the category of "regional" art practices and expression: it took the world to represent Saskatchewan. The building of communities through the collaborative processes involved in the making of the mural paralleled the public function of the mounted mural.

The success of the mural was dependent upon skill, itself an agent that circulated through hybrid groups of people (ie. Hardy, Woolsey, Palecek), tools (ie. slab roller, lawn roller, planks, kiln), and materials (ie. clay, slips, glazes, fire, water). Skill transformed various group combinations as much as they changed its expression. These group formations are part of

[128] Garry Palecek, "Designing and Tackling a Public Commission," paper presented at the Fourth National Ceramic Conference, Melbourne University, 1985.

collaborative practices that involved much improvisation, as the mural emerged within the intersection of processes involving human and non-human agents. I have demonstrated how intentions inscribed in the design of tools and equipment were realized according to specific contexts in interaction with the raw materials and the people. Sometimes these were adaptations based on qualities of a tool that slumbered in its design or material until it became "present –at-hand." Examples of these include the rink, the lawn roller, combine belt, cutter, foam boots, planks of wood, and toilet paper. Olsen's observation of the key role "coming-to-mind" plays in the adaptation of these tools and processes, such as impressed mark-making, painting slips and glazes, and firing implies previously acquired skills. The team's familiarity with all the above-mentioned equipment and materials, coupled with Woolsey's intimate knowledge of the properties of clay, glaze, and fire, and Hardy's interest in colour was transformed by the monumentality of the project. The seepage of monumentality to all levels of organization spurred an awareness of the present-at-hand qualities of all the elements involved in the mural construction. Machinery, aside from the slab roller and clay mixer, had varying levels of risk embedded within their designs that favoured the aesthetic richness of uncertainty inherent in the mural's construction processes. By tracing physical encounters between specific tools and the clay, this chapter shows how Pye's workmanship of risk and workmanship of certainty come together in the mural process. I have elaborated these encounters in order to map out short chains of associations as suggested by Verbeek, identifying them to trace the mechanisms of skill involved in the realization of this mural. These short chains become agents in the establishment of professionalism of Saskatchewan ceramics and the Applied Arts. The "magic" of the art of this mural, then, originates not in technology as anthropologist Alfred Gell implies, but in the shifting group formations involved in the collaboration of hybrid groups that come together and improvise to make "the caveman's bible" come alive.[129]

[129] Alfred Gell, "Technology and Magic, *Anthropology Today* 4, no.2, (April 1988): 6-9.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SYMBOLIC WHEEL: THE WEST-FACING MURAL, JACK SURES

Introduction

The statistics of Jack Sures' west-facing mural are impressive: 4200 tiles over 2900 square feet, thirty-two feet wide at the top, sixty-four feet wide at the base, and fifty-six feet in height.[1] These numbers are almost as impressive as the visual power of the monochrome terra cotta geometric form, with its undulating ripples coloured to catch the reds in the late afternoon and setting sun, standing out in contrast against the white Tyndall stone facing of the Sturdy-Stone Centre. This mural has received much publicity, including its image on the catalogue cover of Sures' 2011 retrospective exhibition at the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina and the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Owen Sound Ontario, *Tactile Desires: The Work of Jack Sures*. Made of vessels that became bricks, the mural is an assemblage of multiples that create a whole, telling a story of co-operation, trouble-shooting, technical expertise, perseverance, patience, determination, resilience and appreciation. The people, tools, materials, geographical locations and ideas that came together as groups in the formation of this work were as complex and different as those that were involved in the east-facing mural.

This chapter traces the biographies of the mural and its maker. It looks at the particular aesthetic, design and technical competencies Jack Sures as the maker brought to the project and how these coloured the solutions he was required to find in face of the challenge of monumentality and its seepage into aspects of production. I describe how Sures grappled with clay and its technologies and how their range of possible configurations emerging from his own experiences became part of the mural's biography, as much as his. Once again, I look to issues of skill, technology, inventiveness and improvisation at the interfaces between materials, people and equipment that informed the final configuration. This argument takes into consideration the context of ceramic production in Canada at this time, and how technical constraints and opportunities involved in architectural commissions acted upon the form and colour of the mural. Once again I look to how the qualities of clay, how these are subject to cultural expectations,

[1] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Outside Murals, Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly*, Box 5 2005-53, 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina and Special Collections.

experience, and interpretation, and how they have been harnessed in the production of this exterior mural. This chapter recognizes the particular importance of non-human agents in the final design of the work.

The Symbolic Wheel - Predicaments of Rhythms and Ridges

The Maker

Sures (b. 1934) quickly gained prominence in the Saskatchewan ceramic community when he moved from Winnipeg to head the Ceramics Department at the Regina College of Art in 1965. Over the next decade he became well regarded: an extensively exhibited studio potter, founder of the ceramics program at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus (later University of Regina), recipient of Canada Council grants, consultant to the Canada Council, executive member of the Canadian Craftsman's Association, SAB board member, active and renowned member of the Canadian ceramic élite and a national and international teacher and workshop leader.[2] Sures was originally contacted about the Sturdy-Stone mural project in 1976 by James Ellemers of the SAB, and consequently submitted a proposal for one of the murals above the elevators. At that time he found the exterior murals intimidating in size; however, he was eventually convinced by the architects to consider the exterior west-facing mural.[3] Unlike Woolsey and Hardy, Sures did bring to this project previous experience in mural making, although none of these approached the monumental dimensions of the Sturdy-Stone west-facing mural nor were they designed for an exterior location.

Sures was academically trained in printmaking and painting at the University of Manitoba, BFA.1957, and earned an MFA at Michigan State University in 1959 where he received his first rudimentary ceramic training. He augmented this ceramic education during a trip to Europe where he was introduced to semi-industrial production based on moulds at Seneshall Pottery and Chelsea Pottery, both in London,[4] and he broadened his knowledge of throwing and mould making giving lessons to help pay for his European visit. After months

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[2] Julia Krueger, "Chronology," in *Tactile Desires: The Work of Jack Sures,* ed. Virginia Eichorn, (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery and Owen Sound: Tom Thomson Art Gallery, 2011), 187-9.
[3] Jack Sures email to the author 13 Aug. 2011.
[4] Krueger, "Chronology," in Eichorn, 186. The Seneshall Pottery is well known for its slip cast and handpainted ceramic cats of many shapes and sizes, while the Chelsea pottery was known for its brightly decorated earthenware that closely followed a pattern book. The Pottery Studio Seneshall Pottery, The Pottery Studio, accessed 12 June 2013, http://www.studiopottery.com/cgi-bin/mp.cgi?item=239; The Pottery Studio Chelsea Pottery, The Pottery Studio, accessed 12 June 2013, http://www.studiopottery.com/cgi-bin/mp.cgi?item=52.

visiting Europe and Israel, Sures returned to Winnipeg where he established his first studio in 1962, set up as a teaching and production facility. There he learned to make his own wheels, including one from "a farmer's milk separator," and to read a kiln design, build it, and correct design flaws that had become evident through firing problems.[5] Professional pottery equipment was at a premium at this time in Canada and studio potters were required to be inventive and improvisational. From this studio he made his first mural, a commission from the University of Manitoba's School of Architecture in 1964, described as representing "the textured fields and linear pattern inspired by the prairie landscape."[6] Central Canadian reception of the mural was not warm, with Toronto-based allied arts critic Anita Aarons remarking that in terms of "art" it was not as "authoritative as Gaboury or as dominating as Simon Fraser - or even as exciting as Jordi Bonet from Montreal."[7] The perception of a central Canadian bias towards the arts of this period cannot be ignored even in a discussion of ceramic murals.

In 1965 Sures was hired by the University of Saskatchewan to set up the printmaking and ceramics department at its Regina campus.[8] His colleagues at the time included members of the Regina Five, Ted Godwin, Art McKay and Ronald Bloore who was then director of the Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery. During that first summer Sures also participated in the Emma Lake workshops where he met John Cage, who, like Sures, capitalized on the element of chance in his compositions.[9] This uncertainty or chance, always part of a potter's life, was considered a fundamental aspect of Eastern philosophies. Sures encountered this more profoundly when he visited Japan the following year, where he was deeply influenced by "the kind of respect for materials and the great variety." During this six-month trip funded by the Canada Council, he came across a range of Japanese working methods, fired in local kilns, and met internationally respected potters such as *Mingei* leader, Shoji Hamada. Sures sees a Japanese aesthetic in his work: "in the relationship between the object and the material…all my work has to do with surface as much as form…the surface is related to the form in that it results from the way it is made." He also decided that Japanese ceramics was really even more "related to clay and the

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[5] Jack Sures interview by Julia Krueger, December 12 2003, Box 2, File 82, Jack Sures Fonds, 2008-72 University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[6] *Jack Sures: A Sensual Touch/ Une sensualité tactile,* directed by Linda Corbett (Eyeris Inc. and the Mackenzie Art Gallery and the Tom Thomson Art Gallery 2011), DVD.
[7] Anita Aarons, "The Western Provinces Part 1: Generalities," *Journal RAIC* 42, no.11, (Nov. 1965): 17.
[8] Krueger, "Chronology," in Eichorn, 186-7.
[9] Matthew Kangas, "Jack Sures: Concentric Circles," in Eichorn, 44.

process" than to function. [10] This was clearly expressed in his 1969 mural for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, and evident in his Sturdy-Stone mural. His ceramic mural work consistently brought together his form and mark-making experiences developed through his printing, clay sculpture and vessel formation practices.

Figure 50: mural commission for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1969

These three disciplines are skilfully integrated in this Veterinary College mural. Composed of a darker plant form on a light ground, it was created largely from textured extruded clay ribbons and thrown pot forms, and coloured through the interplay of the slips and oxides that emerged through the reduction/oxidation process in the gas firing. Sures' integration of

[10] Jack Sures interview by Julia Krueger, 12 Dec. 2003.

vessels within the mural form makes reference to the significance of function in the studio craft movement and the importance of the functional vessel in the history of ceramics. The ribbons of extruded clay introduced an expressive relief surface resulting from a semi-industrial process. He was not alone in such cross references as similar strategies are seen in Jordi Bonet's 1963 Place des Arts tympana, *Hommage à Gaudì*, Tympana No. 3 on the east side of Salle Wilfred Pelletier, Bonet's *The End of Time*, MacDonald Block, Government of Ontario, Toronto, 1966, and Ed Drahanchuk's mural for Pottery Supply House, Oakville Ontario, 1977.[11] These dynamic movements of clay ribbons integrated with vessels was closely tied to the expressionist ceramic movement under the direction of Peter Voulkos working out of the Otis Art institute in California. Noted American ceramic historian, Garth Clark, considers Voulkos a "revolutionary force for ceramics,"[12] as Voulkos and his followers in the 1950s and 1960s slashed, distorted and rebuilt the vessel in contorted forms to highlight the plastic properties of the medium. Although this plasticity had been exploited fifty years earlier by George Ohr, the "mad potter of Biloxi",[13] Clark sees this new incarnation as "the recognition of the complexity of the Japanese ceramic aesthetic."[14] In 1961 the aesthetics of this new clay was introduced to a national craft audience in Rose Slivka's important article, "The New Craft Presence," that created "a furor" in the still conservative American ceramics community.[15] The expressionistic approach informed much of Sures' mural work throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s.[16]

Sures gives an interesting twist to this movement in the Veterinary College mural where the vessel form remains intact, but its ribbons of clay that radiate from the centre are dynamically contorted, twisted, flattened and inflated. These speak of the hand manipulation of long streamers of wet, flexible clay that have been extruded through a machine; they want to move with gravity, and therefore fall and twist, tear and stick together. The interplay of the rigid industrial process of extrusion and the dance of hand manipulation, coupled with carefully thrown vessels enliven the surface of this mural and speak to the history of studio pottery, methods of production, and timely theoretical concerns. In 1972, Sures completed another

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[11] Drahanchuk Studios Ed & Ethel, PSH Home Virtual Gallery, accessed 12 March 2012, http://www.pshcanada.com/gallery/drahanchuk/index-permanent-collection.htm.
[12] Garth Clark, *American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present,* (London: Booth-Clibborn, 1987), 102.
[13] Ibid, 31-32.
[14] Ibid, 102-111.
[15] Rose Slivka, "The New Ceramic Presence," *Craft Horizons* (July/August 1961): 31-37; Garth Clark, *American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present,* (London: Booth-Clibborn, 1987), 117.
[16] For examples of Sures' work of this period see Eichorn, 2011, cat. 18-21, cat. 23.

monumental earthy-toned mural for the University of Regina, with the theme of fecundity of the earth, populated by fantastical creatures squirming and romping through the productive soil. Importantly for this discussion the mural is an assemblage of tubes and ribbons of clay and distorted thrown vessels. Such versatility in material manipulation and stylistic exploration gave him notoriety, but also a reputation for competence and improvisation. Sures attempted to transfer to the Sturdy-Stone project this sense of interplay between machine and human gesture that expressed the clay's plasticity. To do so he turned to these previous experiences in working with radial ribbons, organic movements, extrusion, and eventually vessels in the composition and making of the Sturdy-Stone's "symbolic wheel."

Invention of the Wheel

Although Sures' preference had been to create a mural for the interior of the building above the elevator spaces on the first or second floor, he eventually conceded to tackling the exterior mural on the west façade.[17] Why this space was left unclaimed is open to conjecture: perhaps others were equally intimidated, those submitting were deemed unqualified, or the designs seen by the committee were inappropriate. Sures was without a question conscious of the challenges of large-scale public work. About this project he wrote:

> Doing a public architectural commission is very different from making a simple painting, drawing, sculpture, print or pot. The first consideration is harmonizing the piece with the building. The second is consideration of weathering in this climate in terms of materials. The third consideration is scale. A large-scale architectural piece like this must meet the above requirements, but at the same time must be individualistic, significant and beautiful.[18]

The primary focus of Sures' design is the thirty-five foot diameter circle,[19] and the mural theme for this "ceramic relief" is described in the contract Sures signed with the government as a "Symbolic Wheel" made of "[v]arious colours of fired clay."[20] Euclidian or plane geometry had always been a favourite subject for Sures, and he naturally turned to this to work out the design

[17] Sures, 13 August 2011.
[18] "Jack Sures," Box 6 File 48: commissions. Sturdy Stone provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds, 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[19] "Description of the Mural Process," Box 6 File 48: commissions, Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds, 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[20] "Province of Saskatchewan Department of Government Services, Articles of Agreement," Box 6 File 48: commissions. Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds, 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

challenges for the mural. He calculated the size of the twelve-inch square tiles[21] that form the pattern by progressively subdividing the circle into quarters, eighths, sixteenths, and thirty-seconds to structure the interior of the circle. The outer concentric circles were developed by successively alternating convex and concave tiles between the rows so a relief "S" shape was completed over two rows. As the circle grew in width, wedge tiles were built to fill the spaces between the alternating lines of convex and concave square tiles until the wedges themselves were as large as the tiles. In this case, the concave wedges were juxtaposed with the convex square tiles, and the convex wedges were juxtaposed with the concave square tiles to keep the alternating rhythms. After six rows, sixty-four alternating concave and convex tiles of the same width completed the circle's circumference. As the circle grew for an additional six rows from this point, another series of undulating wedge tiles were inserted between the concave and convex tiles. But in order to differentiate them from the concave and convex tiles they abutted, the new series created a wave where the curve extended over two rows growing in width each row. This strategy created a complex visual rhythm, solved the problem of growing the circle with tiles of a manageable size and weight, and importantly capitalized on a modular structure. Sures successfully increased the diameter of the circle until the circumference finally comprised sixty-four full-size concave and convex tiles separated from each other by the wedges with the longer curves. Clay tubing around the circumference completes the circle. The nine-inch by twelve-inch background tiles follow the angle of the verticals of the trapezoid, meeting in the middle so the left side and right side are mirror images of one another.[22] The difference in width between the top and base of the trapezoid is accommodated by progressively inserting wedges of background tiles in two places, at the top of the trapezoid and from the base of the circle. This geometric complexity respecting the regularity of repetition creates a visually complex but coherent structure.

The terra cotta hues and the repetitive rectangular forms tie this building into traditional hand-laid brickwork that was historically an important Saskatchewan building material. In contrast to the implied massiveness of the Tyndall stone and concrete that both suggest large equipment and complex technology, the visual size of Sures' tiles, evidently easily manipulated

[21] "Description of Mural Process," Box 6 File 48: commissions. Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds, 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[22] Ibid.

by hand in terms of weight and size, relate comfortably with the body. Alfoldy observes that craft is usually associated with small-scale objects where "an intimacy with the body is implicit in the domain of the crafts,"[23] and I would also suggest, small-scale production. Despite the massiveness of the entire work the mural's component pieces speak to this intimacy. The piling of the vertically oriented rectangular background tiles, however, is not in line with traditional brick laying where structural stability depends on staggered joints. By placing one tile on top of another it is clear these are facing tiles that metaphorically create a grid pattern common to the prairie geopolitical landscape based on surveying. In this way, while referencing brickwork, the mural's tiles also distance themselves from the traditional builder's practice, a distance that aligns the mural with modernist practices. An element inherent within the history of brick making, repetitive three-dimensional modularity, does however impact on the mural's form. This exterior work thereby juxtaposes the monumentality of modern public architecture with small-scale craft and building practices intimately related to the body. This speaks not only to architectural craft but also to the craft of architecture.[24]

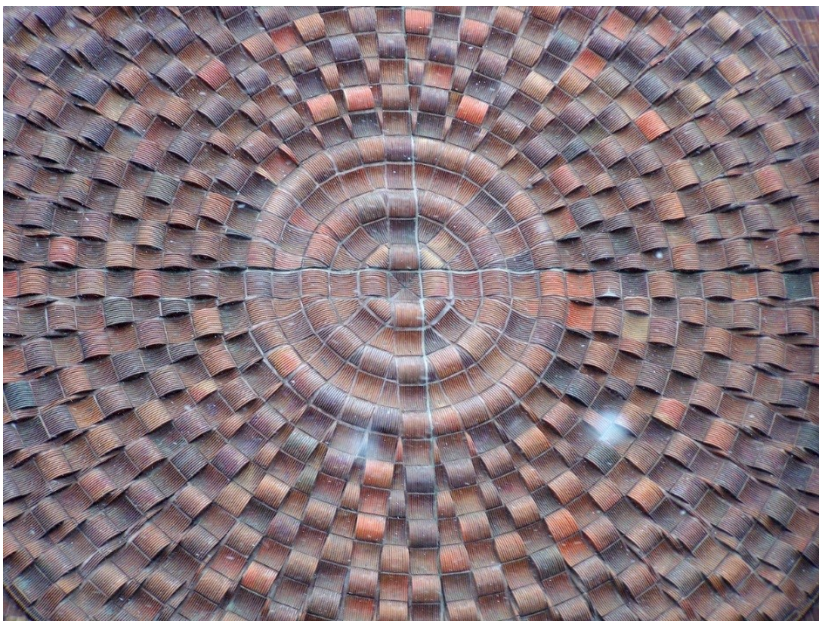

Figure 51: Detail of west façade mural showing the growth of the circle

[23] Sandra Alfoldy, *The Allied Arts: Architecture and Craft in Postwar Canada,* (Montreal and Kingston, London, Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 63.
[24] Gloria Hickey, "Introduction," in *Common Ground: Contemporary Craft, Architecture, and the Decorative Arts*, ed. Gloria Hickey, (Hull: The Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Institute for Contemporary Canadian Craft), 16.

Figure 52: detail of west façade mural showing configuration of background tiles

Representations

The abstraction of "Symbolic Wheel" aligns it with the modernist painting aesthetic practiced in Saskatchewan during this period. Textured geometric monochromatic paintings of Regina Five member Ronald Bloore, a friend of Sures, are recalled through the terra cotta mural.[25] Bloore's white or dichromatic repetitive rhythms created in low relief are evident in works, such as *Painting No. 1,* 1959*, Untitled* 1960 ink on paper, *Untitled (Egyptian Star and Trajan's Column),* 1972, all in the collection of the Mackenzie Art Gallery. While some of Bloore's works from this period have overt architectural references to brickwork through repeated alternating rows of rectangles, such as *Untitled,* 1958, *Untitled,* 1959 and *Painting No. 1*, 1959, others such as *Untitled*, 1960 rely on the circle with textured radiations for their structure.[26] In both series, Bloore capitalizes on the structure inherent in geometric forms, emphasized through a limited palette, which he explained actually involved at "one time up to forty different tubes of white on

[25] Virginia Eichorn, "Tactile Desires: The Life and Work of Jack Sures," in Eichorn, 2011, 22.
[26] Terrence Heath, *Ronald Bloore: Not Without Design,* (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1993), *Untitled,* 1958, Plate 3; *Untitled,* 1959, Plate 4; *Painting No. 1*, 1959, Plate 5; *Untitled,* 1960, Plate 6.

[his] painting table."[27] Bloore's exploration with circles is linked to the paintings of another Sures friend, colleague, and Regina Five member, Art McKay. [28] McKay, an associate professor of art at Regina, had been responsible for initially hiring Sures.[29] A student of religion and interested in Zen Buddhism, McKay was well known for his mandala works. In a 1997 discussion of McKay's paintings for a major retrospective of his work, Mackenzie Art Gallery curator Timothy Long began by asserting: "The career of Art Mckay has been identified with a single image – the circle or mandala – an image which characterized his work for two decades beginning in 1961."[30] McKay built up the visual textures in this series through alternative actions of painting and scraping, which were executed using two strategies that underscored the structural elements of the circle: one that emphasized the radii of the circle, and another that relied upon the spiral or concentric circles. The former approach can be seen in *Occurrence in Open Space (not unlike a prairie landscape)* 1962, *Attentive Image,* 1963, *Circle (Brown)*, 1963, and *Flux,* 1964; while *Concentric* Image, 1965 is an example of the latter.[31] Although he worked in this style principally in the 1960s, with titles such as *Effulgent Image,* 1961, (Mackenzie Art Gallery), and *Flux*, 1964 (Edmonton Art Gallery), at the end of the 1970s he painted both *Mandala For a Small Demon*, 1978 as well as *Mandala on a Black Background,* 1979.[32] In his essay, Long has also pointed out the importance of the space or "margin" within the frame surrounding the circle that was "painted a solid colour" or "with a texture of their own."[33] The same concerns with geometric structures are found in Sures' circle with its clear radii and concentric lines.

This monumental ceramic mural relates as well to clay forming procedures and experiences. Concentric circles are highlighted in the centre, but the succeeding wavy circles are

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[27] Ronald Bloore, "The Challenge of Colour," video, *ARTSask: Artist Profile: Ronald Bloore,* accessed 5 Aug. 2012, http://www.artsask.ca/en/artists/ronaldbloore.
[28] "Themes: Beyond Representation: Effulgent Image," ArtSask, accessed 14 Aug. 2012, http://www.artsask.ca/en/collections/themes/beyondrepresentation/arthurfortescuemckay/effulgent_image#.
[29] Eichorn, "Tactile Desires: The Life and Work of Jack Sures," in Eichorn, 2011, 22.
[30] Timothy Long, "Barnes, Dewey, Suzuki: Meditations on a Circle," in *Arthur F. McKay: A Critical Retrospective,* ed. David Howard, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1997), 51.
[31] Howard, 1997, *Occurrence in Open Space (not unlike a prairie landscape)* 1962, cat. 34; *Attentive Image* 1963, cat. 40; *Circle (Brown)* 1963, cat. 42, 46; *Flux* 1964, cat.47; *Concentric* Image 1965, cat. 48.
[32] "Lot 714," and "Lot 713," Artvalue.com, Levis Fine Art Auction and Appraisals Nov. 18 2007, accessed 14 Aug. 2012, http://www.artvalue.com/auctionresult--mckay-fortescue-arthur-1926-20-mandala-on-black-background-1737432.htm, and http://www.artvalue.com/auctionresult--mckay-fortescue-arthur-1926-20-mandala-for-a-small-demon-1737428.htm.
[33] Long, 1997, 53.

more complex, with radii that form the alternating concave and convex surfaces looking like woven ribbons. This ultimately contributes to a highly complex surface unachievable through painting processes, but possible in sculpture. Increased surface complexity in this mural contributes to what Anthony Caro has called an "appropriate dynamic, a logic of enlargement," which addresses the potential pitfall whereby "certain ideas in art can appear very small-brained when distorted beyond their own possibilities of growth."[34] The prolonged presence of both McKay and Bloore's works in the Saskatchewan cultural community assured the acceptance of Sures' own circular monochromatic high relief mural design that also exploited repetitive rhythms and emphasized geometric forms, adapted for monumentality. This detailed stylistic and structural analysis shows the social and material connections within this object, thereby bringing together the global and the local, flattening these concepts as Latour suggests, but through the means of ceramic relief.

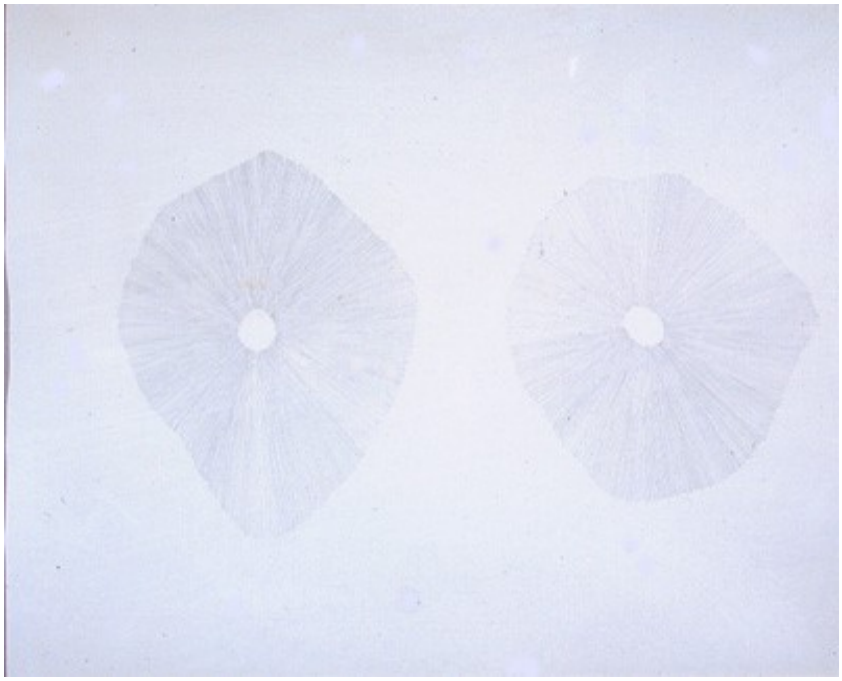

Figure 53: *Untitled,* Ronald Bloore, 1960

[34] Anthony Caro quoted in Deanna Petherbridge, "Exaggerations of the Public Order: complexities and practicalities of carrying out commissions," in *Art Within Reach: Artists and craftworkers, architects and patrons in the making of public art,* ed. Peter Townsend, (London: Thames and Hudson, published by "Art Monthly" in collaboration with the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Crafts Council, 1984), 49.

Figure 54: *Effulgent Image*, Art McKay, 1961

Beyond its formal qualities the mural invites representational associations suitable for a diverse Saskatchewan audience. As Sures explained, he considered the circle to be not just an exercise in formalism, but also a symbol of universality to which many groups of people could relate: "The circle in the centre of this piece represents many things. It is a mandala, a sun, a flower. It symbolically represents the continuity of life."[35] In terms of Saskatchewan's multicultural self-identification this idea of universality would be important to its audience; the mandala form, a "representation of the universe," referring simultaneously to the microcosm and macrocosm of existence and "the organizational principles of life," has been used by many cultures.[36] Thus it opens up a space in which shifting audiences can construct identities. As the First Nations achieve more cultural, political and economic power in Saskatchewan, the circle of the Sturdy-Stone may be increasingly interpreted as a symbol integral to their own cultural and

[35] "Jack Sures," 38 Box 6 File 48: commissions. Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives.
[36] "What is a Mandala?", accessed 12 Aug. 2012, http://www.mandalaproject.org/what/index.html,; "Mandala." Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th Edition 1, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost; "mandala, n."; OED Online, September 2013, Oxford University Press, accessed November 18, 2013). http://0-www.oed.com.mercury.concordia.ca/view/Entry/113286?redirectedFrom=mandala.

spiritual framework. The cultural importance of the terra cotta coloured circle was certainly evident in the First Nations performances in *Sighting, Siting, Citing,* 2006 performed at the Claybank Brick Plant National Historic Site, where the hills surrounding the industrial ruins of the brick plant still had traces of the stone circles placed by the aboriginal peoples.[37] Worth quoting here are the words from the performance "Industry and Geometry."

> And first dreamers here, who left no bricks no warehouses for earth, but pots round-formed to rest in her embrace, know from long living that they themselves are vessels, earthen too filled to the brim like the grass-sung altar-land that ribbed and billowing lodge above; and from that fullness, the pipestone bowl lifts their prayers, making sacred the naming of hills, the placing of stones, the [placing of stories, in the holy care of circles in a circular land… From the old geometry a new one is extracted: hand-sized, right-angled units formed, baked, stockpiled and shipped to towns and farms; stacked upright, foursquare upon the arcing land; the colour of sunrise, tawny reminder of wildness now conscripted, taken in hand; the earth turned stone again, hardening boundaries we once marked with our skin.[38]

This important referential aspect of Sures design addresses what Hariette Senie saw as the problem of "art without recognizable content as being unable to fulfill the traditional commemorative role of public sculpture." [39] In this case the mural can be seen to commemorate or honour the First Nations history in the province, projecting their presence into the future, while simultaneously respecting the brick makers of the past.

As the mural was mounted it was interpreted as "a large flower, with a field of waving grass symbolizing Saskatchewan massiveness."[40] These recognizable elements in Sures' designs were sought out by his audience who still continue to talk about the relief as "resembling a giant sunflower," or as "the rippling waves of the central disc [like] the grain fields surrounding the city." [41] Grain has long been an iconic image in representations of Saskatchewan, which supplies sixty per cent of Canada's crop.[42] The prairies have historically been loftily called "granary of

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[37] The cultural importance of the circle was particularly evident in the following performances: *The Creator's Gift,* Sharon Pelletier and Keith Bird; *Industry and Geometry,* and *Vision*, Kathleen Irwin, "Double-crossing/Vying Representations," in Katheleen Irwin and Rory MacDonald eds., *Sighting, citing, siting: theorizing practice, Crossfiring/mama wetotan,* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 2009), 44-45.
[38] The words spoken in this performance are from Trevor Herriot, "Out of the Kiln," quoted in Irwin and MacDonald, 15-19. The specific quotations are found on 16,17.
[39] Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation and Controversy,* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 15.
[40] "Huge Mural Growing on Wall," *Regina Leader-Post*, (July 13 1979): 5.
[41] Timothy Long, "Which Way is Up," in Eichorn, 2011, 65.
[42] A.B. Campbell, "Wheat," *Canadian Encyclopedia,* accessed 10 Aug. 2012, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/wheat.

the continent," or "the breadbasket of the world," as the area produces three times what is domestically consumed. Wheat has even been portrayed as, "the food of civilized nations."[43] One historian recently described wheat as "one prairie symbol [that] erased ethno-religious boundaries:" for settlers who came from agricultural backgrounds "wheat …symbolized a seamless continuity between the old world and the new," and for many it also "played a ritual function." Therefore wheat evokes settler prairie identity within "both secular and scared contexts."[44] Interestingly, while wheat is native to North America, the successful cultivated varieties of the prairies were developed in the early twentieth-century from imports, paralleling the immigrant experience. But this reference to wheat also has negative connotations within a post-colonial context. The nineteenth-century colonization of the prairies depended upon a double strategy: appropriating First Nations land for wheat cultivation, and convincing/forcing First Nations and Métis to become farmers and raise wheat within a very restricted reservation format. Numerous scholarly literature and oral First Nations testimony has revealed the problems with this government project that systematically sabotaged successful cultivation and marketing.[45] The province relied heavily on wheat economically and for its world image, and in 1977, the year the mural was designed, a stylized wheat sheaf was adopted as a logo for the executive offices of the provincial government.[46]

Like wheat, the image of the sunflower on the prairie also corresponds to the colonization of the west and the appropriation of First Nation lands. The sunflower, a native to North America, including nineteen species found in Canada, was originally introduced to Europe by Spanish explorers and re-introduced as a crop to Canada by Mennonite settlers in the later-nineteenth century.[47] Although it had been established in Manitoba as a cash crop in the 1970s, it was just beginning to be seriously considered in Saskatchewan, with soil and yield testing being

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[43]Rosemary Donegan, *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan*, (Regina Sask.: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1991), 6, 18, 19.
[44] Frances Swyripa, *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies,* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 183.
[45] Sarah Carter, "'We Must Farm To Enable Us To Live': The Plains Cree and Agriculture to 1900," in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience,* 2nd edition, eds. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 444-470.
[46] Canadian Plains Research Centre, "Table ES –1 Official Emblems of Saskatchewan," PDF *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan,* accessed 10 Aug. 2012, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/emblems_of_saskatchewan.html.
[47] Lawrence D. Charlet and John Gavloski, "Insects of Sunflower in the Northern Great Plains of North America," in *Arthropods of Canadian Grasslands (Volume 2): Inhabitants of a Changing Landscape*, ed. Kevin D. Floate, (Ottawa: Biological Survey of Canada, 2011),159-160.

carried out to determine its commercial viability.[48] It is now cultivated throughout the province with sixty-six thousand acres planted in 1999. The Saskatchewan Sunflower Committee who promotes it throughout southern Saskatchewan currently supports sunflower cultivation.[49] As the agricultural practices and crops of Saskatchewan shift, so too does the reading of the mural.

The mural's reference to the sunflower can also be traced to geological sources. Bloore's 1960 ink on paper, *Untitled* and Sures' Sturdy Stone mural design, both have a strong resemblance to the so-called sunflower coral fossil pattern found in Tyndall stone itself. Tyndall stone originated in the shallow Ordovician sea of the ancient Luarasian continent, whose geological remnants today form parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.[50] This reference conceptually ties together the stone and stoneware tiles. The mural's design then engages the public in terms of painting history, architecture, spiritual matters, local geology and modern agriculture, inviting associations that span millions of years.

Figure 55: Mural commission for the Classroom Building, University of Regina, Jack Sures, 1971

[48] D.W.L. Read, C.H. Anderson, and C.A, Campbell, "Growing Sunflowers in Southwestern Saskatchewan," *Canadian Journal of Plant Science* 62, no. 2 (April 1982): 311-316.
[49] Elaine Moats, "Sunflower in Saskatchewan," December 2009-Janurary 2010, accessed 5 Sept 2011, http://www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/agv_dec_09_5.
[50] Mario Coniglio, "Manitoba's Tyndall Stone," *Wat on Earth*, University of Waterloo, Monday May 24 1999, accessed 12 Aug. 2012, https://uwaterloo.ca/wat-on-earth/news/manitobas-tyndall-stone.

Figure 56: Detail of mural commission for the Classroom Building

Sures' geometric design for this mural was, in fact, quite different from the organic forms he had been using in much of his previous tile work between 1970 and 1975. In these, indistinct tubular vegetable/animal hybrid forms seethed in a fecund earth, globular creatures with distinctive faces and body forms.[51] Mackenzie Art Gallery curator Nancy Dillow, wrote of this "subject matter" as "whimsical," with a "fairy-tale character," and an "inherent sexuality." She understood these "voluptuous imaginative creatures" as inhabiting "an Eden-like world until the parody of the human world is detected."[52] While these murals were well received, they were humorously quirky and difficult to present within a monumental context for a diversified public: for their meaning they relied upon detail, the grotesque, parody and at times sexual innuendoes.

[51] Examples of this series include: *Valley of the Beasts*, 1971; *Adam Waiting,* 1971; *A Small Reminder,* 1975; *Red Dots in an Asparagus Garden,* 1975. See Eichorn, 2011, cat. 35, cat. 36, cat. 40, cat. 42.
[52] Nancy Dillow, "Introduction," in *Jack Sures,* (Regina: Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, 1976).

This imagery has been consistently developed by Sures throughout his career in drawings, prints and in clay, and its transgressive nature aligned Sures with the avant-garde "Funk" ceramics of the Regina Clay Movement. The 1971 Regina campus mural illustrates the difficulty in transposing this imagery to a large scale: its dimensions and viewing distance in a stairwell are at the comfortable limit of this rather intimate imagery. While the humorous earthy imagery was suitable for the University of Regina where Sures maintained an active studio practice, it could not have a broad-based public appeal for an external mural on an iconic public government building in Saskatoon. The Sturdy-Stone design adopted by Sures indicated his awareness of the importance of taking into consideration a different kind of public within the new monumental and exterior format. The "symbolic wheel" design in fact looks back to his earlier 1969 Veterinary College mural before this "Funk" period. Elements serving as design precursors include the prominence of a circular flower form, the use of strong contrast between a light background and natural-coloured clay, his regularly striated undulating rays created with oxide shading that move from the centre of the flower, and the importance of extruded forms. The Sturdy-Stone mural harnesses all these elements and regularizes them.

Monumental Problem Solving

Sures signed the contract with the government 5 July 1977, and completion was foreseen for 30 May 1978,[53] but his greatest challenge was ahead – how to realize this complex monumental work. He had to take into consideration building codes, secure consistently appropriate clay in the required amounts, design custom equipment and ensure its timely manufacture, hire, train, and manage a competent labour force, locate and transform a suitable building to accommodate the fabrication process and juggle his teaching load at the University of Regina. In contrast to the Woolsey-Hardy mural project, a completely different set of groups became operative. Sures' status as a fulltime professor meant he had time constraints, but also access to a labour pool quite different than that involved for the east-facing mural project. His residency in Regina, a large city, also necessitated a more rigid approach to kilns and burners and more access to possible studio locations. To this project he brought experience attached to

[53] "Province of Saskatchewan Department of Government Services: Articles of Agreement," Box 6 File 48: Commissions: Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

industrial and semi-industrial processes such as mould-making and working with extruder and gas kiln technology, coupled with a preference for the complex aesthetics of Japanese ceramics.

Sures now considers himself young and naïve when he tackled the project and regards the research he undertook as "minimal:" he was entirely responsible for unravelling the technical aspects of his project which included reading Saskatchewan's building codes for external tiles on concrete surfaces, and determining the appropriate clay required.[54] Involvement with the architects was negligible as Sures was provided only with the architectural plans, as well as a subsequent modification around the time the contract was signed.[55] Such a situation is not surprising as supervising architect Philip Scott remembers having to coordinate at least thirty different contracts related to the construction of the Sturdy-Stone building, many of them simultaneously.[56] Under such circumstances it would be assumed that those contracted for specific tasks had the expertise required to execute them. But this also brings up one of the complaints made by Aarons: there needed to be more and better cooperation and communication between the artists and architects.

While this might seem to be an accepted state of affairs, the thrust of fine craft in the 1960s and 1970s and the formalization of the professional craft associations had been mainly associated with the development and marketing of craft objects that would integrate with the white cube display fundamental to museums and galleries.[57] Lack of such training for architectural commissions was evident when considering Aarons' articles regarding professionalism and design appropriateness. It was seen, too, in the need to establish a program dedicated to the integration of crafts and architecture at Fanshawe College, in London Ontario. In the Sturdy-Stone project, Sures was the ceramicist with the most experience in previous architectural commissions, but even he was faced with monumental challenges. Like Woolsey and Hardy, he had less than a year to complete a highly complex project.

An important aspect of adhering to the codes was to identify suitable clay for exterior murals and secure a reliable supply. While building code brick specifications were clear, little

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[54] Sures, 13 Aug. 2011.
[55] "Supplementary Instructions to Masonry Contractors Ltd., Contract No. 8 June 28 1977," Box 6 File 48: Commissions: Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[56] Philip Scott interview with the author, Saskatoon, 21 Sept. 2011.
[57] Sandra Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity: The Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada*, (McGill Queens: Montreal & Kingston, 2005), 87-88.

work had been done for exterior murals, but it was accepted that they had to be water-resistant and therefore high-fired to stoneware temperatures. When the contract was signed, Sures had already determined he would use "various colours of fired clay,"[58] and after consulting the ceramic engineer at Plainsman Clay for technical information, and accessing technical information Plainsman had assembled for Woolsey, he settled on medium-fired heavy red stoneware clay.[59] Woolsey's requirement for light coloured clay that would not distort glaze and slip colours was markedly different from Sures' requirement for a body that would express earthiness. This problem was resolved by mixing together clays containing red iron oxide that would react well with targeted spraying of salt oxides in oxidation and reduction atmospheres.[60] Calculating the shrinkage of the clay from a wet to dry state taking into consideration the complex construction of the circle was one of his biggest challenges because his handmade tiles had to fit tightly together.[61] Another consideration included the firing temperature of the tiles that had a differential of forty degrees, normal for variations in a downdraft gas-fired kiln, but one that could mean a slightly different final shrinkage. Plainsman Clay was able to guarantee a consistent supply of forty thousand pounds of clay for the 9500 square foot mural.[62]

Sures was quickly learning what others involved in the same situation also came to realize, that "a public commission inevitably leads to complex matters of sub-contracting and organization."[63] During the making of the mural Sures retained his full-time teaching load, but the art department took into consideration the long blocks of time he would need to devote to the project, facilitating the completion of the mural by adjusting his teaching schedule. The new arrangements required him to teach a full course load over two days a week which required nine hours of studio classes twice a week. This intense compressed teaching week was followed by a gruelling four day stint working long hours on the mural. Little time or energy was available for the usual demands of family life that involved two very young children including a newborn. This type of working arrangement was certainly uncommon for those involved in public

[58] "Province of Saskatchewan Department of Government Services: Articles of Agreement," Box 6 File 48: Commissions: Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38,University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[59] Sures, 13 Aug. 2012.
[60] "Description of Mural Process," Box 6 File 48: Commissions: Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[61] Jack Sures email to the author 23 Aug. 2012.
[62] Eva Schacherl, "Murals Adorn Downtown Building, *Star-Phoenix (Saskatoon),* (Saturday September 1 1979): 6.
[63] Deanna Petherbridge, "Exaggerations of the Public Order: complexities and practicalities of carrying out commissions," in Townsend, 54.

sculpture commissions where the norm for the artists was to devote themselves full-time to the project.[64]

Teaching gave Sures access to a labour force of young enthusiastic up-coming ceramicists at the Regina College of Art. This project was an important introduction into the professional ceramic world for the students and new graduates who he employed, offering them experience and technical information otherwise difficult, if not impossible, to attain. Sures recognized them as professionals and showed his appreciation for their expertise by paying them more than the minimum wage.[65] Such a strategy of hiring students and fellow artists was a common one involving public projects at this time in Britain,[66] but ran in the face of the trend in the professionalization of fine craft that "emphasized individualism and one-off production."[67] This was also the case in Canada which looked to the American model that Alfoldy has noted privileged "self-expression, humanistic dimensions, individuality, and experimentation," and self–reflexivity. These values were transmitted to Canadian craftspeople through their education in the United States and through American-educated teachers in Canadian universities.[68] While such individualism might have worked for smaller projects, it was not an effective approach when monumental work was required.

Sures organized and supervised the workers who were each hired for a forty-hour week. The fair wage he paid and the history of close association between all the participants, including the teacher/student bond, encouraged a good working atmosphere. Three of the workers who were hired for various periods between the fall of 1977 and the fall of 1978 recalled the camaraderie and how they appreciated the wages and experience they gained working on a large-scale public commission. While some acknowledged the strenuous physical labour and the uncomfortable cool conditions in the studio during the winter, they all felt they had contributed to an important work of art, and had acquired a variety of skills that could not have been learned elsewhere. Participation meant different things for different people: enough funds for an educational trip; an example in perseverance and problem solving; and a model for dealing with

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[64] Petherbridge, 54.
[65] Sures paid his workers $5.00/hour when the minimum wage in Saskatchewan was a bit over $2.00/hr. Jack Sures email to the author, 22 Aug. 2011.
[66] Petherbridge, 53.
[67] Martina Margetts, "Rediscovering the Craftworker: the role of craft in architecture," in Townsend, 67.
[68] Alfoldy, 2005, 127, 129.

large-scale sculpture projects.[69] The students worked on the mural, but it also worked on the students, or as Verbeek suggests, the mural and workers co-shaped one another.

Sures found an economical and spatially suitable warehouse in an "isolated industrial part of Regina,"[70] to accommodate the tons of clay he had to store, the various pieces of equipment and provide adequate working space for several employees at a time. The studio set-up period occupied four months of his time, involving installation of a plywood subfloor and partial floor and gypsum board on the walls.[71] He also began to design and amass the numerous pieces of equipment. Photos, sketches and scale drawings indicate the intense organization required to develop this highly specific space. Sures built multi-level racks on wheels for drying the sculptured tiles that facilitated easy transportation to the kiln, tables, boards for shelves and wall shelving supports. Because he had decided to use extruded clay slabs as the main design and structural element in order to express the ideas of fluidity and gesture he had previously worked with in his architectural projects, he devised a custom-made hydraulic extruder and suitable dies. The requirements were precise as the dimensions of these ribbons exceeded the limits of standard studio extruders. While this extruder was not always reliable,[72] it was a much more efficient option than rolling slabs, texturing them and cutting them the required dimensions. The twenty-five centimetre wide extruder die fabricated to create the humped form of the 2400 background tiles was ridged with twenty-four points on its upper surface to produce a face that would echo the rhythmic wave of the concentric circles in the finished mural. Its underside impressed irregularities to facilitate adherence with the mortar.[73] For the tiles comprising the circle, Sures also had a die made with indentations that formed positive shapes of ten semi-circles, each 2.5 cm. wide. The ridged surfaces contribute to the design unity of the mural by visually fusing the surface textures of the tiles at a micro level with the waves in the concentric circles at the macro level. This mural might be composed of ribbons, but these were to be regularized in their movements, in contrast to the highly expressive nature of those used previously.

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[69] All information from the three mural workers was provided to the author by responses to a series of questions. The workers who responded include Charley Farrero, Karen Dahl and Bruce Anderson.
[70] Karen Dahl, emailed interview response, 9 Dec. 2011.
[71] Sures, 22 Aug. 2011.
[72] Charley Farerro emailed interview response, 12 Nov. 2011.
[73] "Extruder Die #1" and "Extruder Die #2" Box 6 File 49: Commissions. Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building. Diagrams. Approx. 1977, 99-38 Jack Sures, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

Figure 57: Studio in industrial section of Regina with interior constructed specifically for the mural project

Sures, known for constructing and designing gas-fired kilns in Manitoba and Saskatchewan,[74] also had to plan and construct a new downdraft gas kiln that could comfortably fire a large quantity of tiles to mid-range stoneware temperatures. His previous experience with kiln building and firing under a variety of conditions to different temperatures, coupled with his confidence in improvisation, were key factors in his consideration to fabricate a kiln considered monumental for studio practice. This new kiln was the largest yet, designed with an interior space measuring 81 x 45 x 72 inches, almost 152 cubic feet. Adequate burners and a custom built regulation chimney were required for such a large kiln. For help with the burners Sures wrote to Jim Clachrie of Heritage Kiln Burners in Calgary Alberta.[75] Clachrie had established himself as an expert in burner manufacturing and was known from Vancouver to Saskatchewan for his expertise.[76] According to Sures, the five burners he envisioned had to provide appropriate power

[74] Orland Larson, "Profile: Jack Sures," *Artisan News,* (Summer 1980): 6.
[75] Letter from Jack Sures to Jim Clachrie, 7 Oct. 1977, Box 6 File 49: Commissions: Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building. Diagrams Approx. 1977, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Heritage Kiln Burners, Box 6 File 49: Commissions: Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building. Diagrams Approx. 1977, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[76] Martin Halstead Place, "The Gas Fired Pottery Kiln Design and Use for Schools," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977, vii, 76.

for an efficient firing, as well as be convenient enough for an overnight warm-up without his being required to "attend" the firing. Clachrie was to "manufacture the burners, the pilots and include gas cocks and safety devices as part of each unit, for efficient installation at this end by not so knowledgeable plumbers."[77] Sures explained these requirements in early October, days before he ordered thousands of dollars of clay and the fourteen by twenty-eight inch kiln shelves.[78] He had carefully designed the kiln so each pair of five burners per side would correspond to the placement of each kiln shelf, assuring an even firing and close atmospheric control. The multiple layers of kiln shelves meant a purchase of about twenty-five high fire kiln shelves.[79] Sures relied upon Clachrie as well for help in calculating the interior diameter of his chimney, which required an adequate draw for an efficient firing and had to meet Regina fire regulations, taking into consideration the roof pitch and surrounding combustible materials.[80] Sures also had to design and install a canopy to remove carbon monoxide and fumes around the indoor kiln so his workers would remain healthy. The hard bricks for the kiln would have originated in Claybank.

Figure 58: Sures kiln flue

[77] Letter from Jack Sures to Jim Clachrie, 7 Oct. 1977; Heritage Kiln Burners.
[78] Plainsman Clays Limited account of Jack Sures, Box 10 File 165: Finances: supplies and materials 1965-1978, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[79] The author's calculation of twenty-five shelves is derived from Sures' kiln measurements, diagrams for burners, and size of tiles. Each row was comprised of 5 shelves and with accommodation for loading space for the size of the tiles and air circulation around the tiles, as well as the cost of the shelves, twenty-five shelves is a reasonable estimate.
[80] Letter from Jack Sures to Jim Clachrie, 7 Oct. 1977; Heritage Kiln Burners.

Technical and safety requirements regarding studio gas-fired kilns were becoming more common and more stringent in the late 1970s. Alberta had formalized a very detailed safety code regarding installation requirements, while British Columbia's was still quite cursory. The National Building Code clearly articulated the requirements for flue pipes in relation to surrounding materials.[81] Sures' experience with building kilns let him appreciate the technical requirements, gave him confidence to contact experts for technical advice, and provided tools for negotiations with the local fire department regarding regulations. In the end, Sures, had actually built and equipped a complete new temporary studio in order to make the mural. The studio, the equipment, and the people in it formed a social unit brought together for one purpose, to make the mural. When the actual action with the clay started, this carefully planned unit broke apart.

The construction method for the mural was meticulously planned to take into consideration working schedules and clay experience. One of Sures' workers commented on the need for tightly regulated and carefully coordinated work schedules within the five-day, forty-hour week.[82] Each of the tools and people had specific roles to play. One of the extruder dies was to provide a purely structural element: a thirteen centimetre high semi-circle of clay with double perforations that acted as a bridgework. This was attached to a clay slab base and supported the ridged extruded ribbon of clay that was affixed to this bridgework with slip- a highway with supporting columns. Timing was essential as all supporting bridgework pieces had to be dry enough to hold their form, but wet enough to assure adherence between the two clay surfaces. As well, the ridged extrusions had to be flexible enough to slump over the supports, but dry enough not to collapse. While collapse and twisting had been a desired result in previous murals, this aesthetic of "sloppy craft" or calculated lack of skill was anathema here.

[81] Place, 68-73. Alberta's code consisted of two pages of single spaced instructions articulated under five points, accompanied by a clearance and materials table; whereas B.C.'s instructions consisted of five points on one half a page with a minimum of technical specifications.
[82] Bruce Anderson emailed interview response, 23 Nov. 2011.

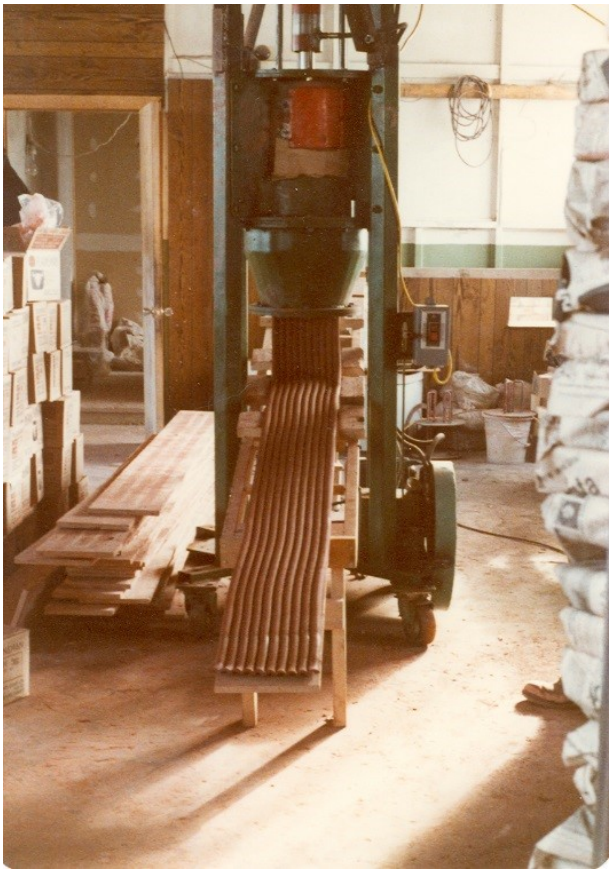

Figure 59: Sures' extruder with ribbon components emerging

Figure 60: Jack Sures adding slip to the supports to receive the long clay ribbon

Figure 61:
Laying the clay ribbon across the support structures to form the open tiles

Through careful assemblage the team created a complex pattern of undulating tiles, reminiscent of terra cotta roof tiles, and in this tradition, the tiles had openings. Unfortunately, this design proved to be a failure because of its structural flaws. After making and firing a complete kiln load of the tiles, Sures noticed hairline cracks, probably due to the structural strain inherent in the bridgework construction. These cracks compromised the integrity of the tile due to potential moisture penetration and the freeze-thaw cycles typical of Canadian winters.[83] Jake Ketler, as the supervising mason, also became involved at this point, after the two-day autumn meeting of all those involved in the mural project. During his studio visit and with the approval of the architects he vetoed the whole design because of the hollow areas, which Ketler determined would not just let in water and break during the freezing/thawing process, but would

[83] Sures, 22 August 2011.

also allow birds to nest within the spaces.[84] One of Sures' workers remembers the angst of that period.

> Regarding time management on the project itself, there were technical challenges in the original design…After developing a system and working out the day to day plan, it was extremely disappointing to find out after the completion of a substantial amount of the project that the system was flawed and the engineers would not accept the "tile" pieces.[85]

Despite all Sures' accumulated experience, nothing could have actually prepared him adequately for this task. He was not alone in this, as British artists involved in large projects also were faced with the same situation. After undertaking a large mural commission, British artist Graham Crowley remarked, "in spite of the fact that all of us had trained for seven to eight years, we were all inept enough at first when faced with specific problems of a large-scale mural."[86] Sures' worker remarks how the challenge was handled: "To Jack's credit, he went back to the drawing table (literally) and reconfigured the design and adjusted the individual tile structure to develop a new system with enclosed modular components that would be acceptable to the project engineers."[87]

Completion of the mural project was delayed by months, and there was a reasonable doubt it would be delivered by the stipulated date. To recuperate at least some of the raw material, and mitigate cost overrun, Sures' workers recycled the tiles that had been made but not yet fired.[88] The new design challenge was to maintain the integrity of the undulating surfaces of the design in high relief while creating a structurally sound tile block; his solution was to make the tiles into vessels by impressing clay slabs into a press mould, and hand cutting slots for the metal attachments as the only openings. This return to the vessel made through a serial construction technique recalls functional ceramic studio practice, and curiously references Sures' use of the thrown vessel in his 1969 Western College of Veterinary Medicine mural. Sures now entirely redesigned the mural paying attention to the creation of repetitive modular forms that would be the building blocks of the new circular design. To achieve this, he first created twenty-one different shapes that would ultimately comprise the one thousand one hundred pieces of the

[84] Jake Ketler interviewed by the author, Saskatoon, 26 May 2011.
[85] Anderson, 23 Nov. 2012.
[86] Graham Crowley quoted Petherbridge, 53.
[87] Anderson, 23 Nov. 2012.
[88] Ibid.

circle.[89] To take into account shrinkage incurred through the successive mould making processes, the original dimensions of the slabs had to be extended: the surface texture of these original twenty-one shapes was formed by splicing a seven and a half centimetre wide ribbon to the twenty-five centimetre extruded clay ribbon used for the original tiles. This resulted in a wider thirty-two and a half centimetre wide ribbon comprised of thirteen semicircles. Sures made twenty-one mother moulds with these, or as Sures suggests, father moulds,[90] one for each required form, and from these several more working moulds of each shape to speed up production. Before he knew these moulded tiles would actually work as required, Sures had to make several dozen pieces and fit them together.[91]

While the extruder had been a key component of the original process, finally its ultimate role was only to provide a textured design element. Sures could have abandoned the semicircle ridges entirely in the moulded pieces; by retaining them he retained aspects of the aesthetic of the malleability and fluidity of the clay incorporated into the initial design. The moulds included concave and convex models of each shape in the concentric circles, with the wedged shapes also having their own moulds. Each tile-vessel was constructed by pressing a clay slab, cut using a cardboard template, into the mould, compacting the vertical edges, and then scoring and slipping them so the vertical walls, also cut with a template, could be attached. [92] All the seams were reinforced with clay coils to assure they would not split and compromise the tile-vessel. Required slots for the metal attachments were hand cut into the form at a uniform height that would be hidden by the masonry and not exposed to the weather, thus protecting the structural integrity of the vessel and ensuring the metal ties were also protected. This work was detailed, time-consuming, and repetitive, and lacked the large choreographed movements involved in the original design. The authorial mark became less important for each tile element, but was recuperated in the colouring process. Sures was not reassured his system would work until one half the circle was actually made, dried and fired and laid out for inspection. In the spring of 1978 this was finally possible.

[89] "Description of Mural Process," Box 6 File 48: Commissions Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building: Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[90] Sures, 20 Aug. 2012.
[91] Sures, 23 Aug. 2011.
[92] Sures, 20 Aug. 2012.

Figure 62: cutting the background tiles

Figure 63: adding slots for metal strips to enclosed background tile

Figure 64: building the tile vessels in the plaster moulds

Figure 65: trimming the tile vessel

Figure 66:
Half of circle completed and laid out in parking lot of the studio

When the mural was viewed in daylight, the rich terra cotta colour due to the iron in the clay became very obvious, as well as the colour play under changing light conditions. The variations of the tones within each tile and between tiles enliven the surface of the mural, so that the "organic" and "haphazard" quality of the colour arrangement is obvious.[93] Tonal changes were achieved by brushing salt onto targeted areas, and by adjusting the oxidation and reduction atmospheres in the gas kiln in order to create colour effects over the various areas.[94] Final colour patterns have a certain randomness resulting from the placement of the tiles in the kiln, the movement of the fire, heat, and air, and the order of unloading them. This element of chance, tied to the process of firing speaks to the influence of Japanese ceramic aesthetics on Sures.[95] The

[93] Eichorn, "Tactile Desires: The Life and Work of Jack Sures," in Eichorn, 2011, 27-28.
[94] "Description of Mural Process," Box 6 File 48: Commissions Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building: Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[95] Eichorn, "Tactile Desires: The Life and Work of Jack Sures," in Eichorn, 2011, 27-28.

warm red tones of the tiles are within the traditions of vernacular architectural clay, including roof tiles that Sures encountered in southern France and Italy and probably also in Japan. [96] Visual references to the ridges of roof tiles are picked up in the surface texture of the central tiles, as well as the rhythms created through the regular undulations of the background tiles. In this sense the architectural integration of this mural is located within a history of terra cotta architectural applications in other geographical places and different time periods. While this mural is inextricably linked to Saskatchewan craft, agricultural, industrial, and art experience, it also challenges the viewer to look beyond the provincial boundaries, connecting Saskatchewan to other cultural traditions.

The complexity of this intense handmade project resulted in much apprehension for Sures who remembers his "anxiety level was off the charts."[97] Setbacks and the new time-consuming method meant more workers to pay over an extended time, and therefore financial concerns loomed large. Before the project was finished, Sures had run out of money and had to petition the government each month to pay the workers, justifying each time the circumstances that required this unusual request. According to his contract, money was to be released to him in amounts of ten per cent of the $62,000 (approx.) fee at intervals dependent upon various states of completion.[98] Because of his design problems, before the requisite amounts had been completed, Sures already had to pay his workers for many months of labour, and extend the rental of the building. At a Calgary ceramics seminar in early May 1978, where Sures lectured on "Mural Design,"[99] he showed slides that had recently been taken and explained that only one half the mural and half the circle could be seen finished.[100] Despite the contract target date students continued to work on it throughout the summer of 1978.[101] Sures took no salary and the only money he received was from Masonry Contractors Ltd. who hired him to work with them mounting the mural. When the project was completed, Sures donated the kiln he had designed and had made to the University of Regina for the ceramics department, a move the government

[96] Sures, 20 Aug. 2012.
[97] Sures, 23 Aug. 2011.
[98] "Agreement for the Artwork Province of Saskatchewan Department of Government Services," Box 6 File 48: Commissions, Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[99] The conference, "Ceramics Seminar '78: Thinking and Making" was held in Calgary, Alberta, May 6-7. Kreuger, "Chronology," in Eichorn, 2011, 190.
[100] "Description of Mural Process," Box 6 File 48: Commissions Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building: Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[101] Karen Dahl, 9 Dec. 2011.

applauded interpreting it to mean they could have replacement tiles for any of the murals if the need arose.[102] The effort Sures poured into the project with no or miniscule financial return rankled and he exited the project feeling the mural ended up a gift of his labour to Saskatchewan.[103] Sures' assessment concurs with anthropologist James G. Carrier's observation that "people obscure the commodity identity of the object beneath an overlay of their personal effort, which invests it with the identity of the giver and the giver's relationship with the recipient."[104]

Mural Mounted

In spring 1979, the Sturdy-Stone Centre was finally ready for the murals and in mid-May Sures' mural was shipped on twenty pallets to Saskatoon. Over half a year had passed since the mural had been completed, and the setback in mounting was actually related to general construction delays, rather that Sures' ceramic construction problems.[105] The shipping contractor was required to make sure the pallets were "properly protected with insulation" and were cautioned they must take "all precautions with the goods as they are almost irreplaceable."[106] Mounting of this west-facing mural was delayed by rain and completed barely in time for the opening on the afternoon of 20 July 1979. The big challenge in the mounting stage was the contrast between the circularity of the tile movement in the interior form and the linearity of the tiles of the surrounding surface. Bricks and stone facing are usually mounted in straight rows, but this technique was only applicable to the area surrounding the circle. The circle required the masons to adopt a different strategy. Ketler laid out one quarter of "the sunflower," on a flat surface and spaced the joints exactly. He then put marks in the centre and made and marked a circle as a guide. The mural was mounted over several weeks. Ketler reports that he subsequently sealed Sures' mural with silicone because it was not glazed, just sprayed with oxides. Ketler is of the opinion that the mural needs to be treated regularly to continue to protect it from the

[102] Memorandum from Liz Dowdeswell to Dennis Foley, Sept. 14, 1978, R1053, File 190a, , SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[103] Sures telephone interview with the author 8 Sept. 2011.
[104] James G. Carrier, "Exchange," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer, (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2006), 380.
[105] Letter from Cana Construction to Department of Government Services, Nov. 16 1976, R. 1613, File 3.2 SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[106] Government of the Province of Saskatchewan Work Authorization 37620," Box 6 File 48: Commissions, Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building Correspondence 1977-79, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

elements.[107] Sures, evidently unaware of Ketler's silicone coating believes "the mural has not been touched since it went up. But it could sure use a good cleaning."[108] These remarks indicate how little is understood, even today, about the weathering of such unglazed stoneware tiles. The government certified the work completed on 10 August, the date that signalled the commencement of Sures' one-year warranty period.

Figure 67: Mounting the mural June 1979

Ketler's decision to silicone the mural was probably based on published studies from the NRC and *Canadian Builders Digest* from the 1960s. These studies suggested treatment of high suction bricks with a water-soluble silicone resulted in "brickwork of much superior resistance to moisture penetration [and] [b]rickwork panels of silicone-treated brick were cleaner on outdoor

[107] Ketler, 26 May 2011.
[108] Sures, 23 Aug. 2011.

exposure than untreated brick, which were marked by efflorescence."[109] While this applied to treating the bricks before mounting, in 1964 another report indicated that extruded and dry-press bricks when sprayed with a water-based silicone (1/10 of 1 per cent sodium siliconate) "resulted in significant reductions in initial rates of absorption," and when the bricks were examined in mortared panels, there was evidence of "increased resistance to water penetration in panels of siliconed bricks."[110] A key consideration here is the firing temperature of the ceramic tiles. Subsequent studies on firing optimization of bricks suggest most bricks were fired to about 1100°c, about 130-150°c less than Sures was firing his tiles. Therefore the efficacy of the silicone to prevent water penetration is perhaps questionable, but only extensive testing could determine this, an unlikely prospect.

Sures did not abandon murals after he completed the Sturdy-Stone project, nor did he reject the formal vocabulary explored within this project. However, he did not return to the complex mould making process that he had finally adopted for the Sturdy-Stone mural. Rather he restricted his designs to ones that could be successfully and efficiently realized through capitalizing on his large extruder and numerous dies. His experimentation with the extruder and different dies for the Sturdy-Stone project was a technical and design turning point for Sures.[111] In 1979 he combined into two tray designs the two visual languages he had previously been using for murals: their flat surfaces were formed with ridged slabs recalling the Sturdy-Stone ridged tiles, while the surrounding three-dimensional frames was decorated with his fanciful creatures in a garden of delight.[112] Throughout the next decade Sures worked with various series of handmade, individually formed and decorated porcelain and stoneware tiles. He differentiated their surfaces through the manipulation of the pliable clay and their colouring emerged from the interaction of the process of specific firing techniques interacting with sprayed oxides on the clay surface.[113] Sures became very sophisticated in controlling his colour variation in the unglazed clay through patterned oxide spraying, sometimes coupled with coloured engobes, using both

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[109] T. Richie, "Influence of Silicone Pretreatment and Wetting of Brick on Moisture Penetration of Brick Masonry," Research paper No. 96 of the Division of Building Research, Ottawa May 1960, Reprinted from Brick and Clay Record 136, no. 4 (April 1960), 84, National Research Council of Canada.
[110] J.I. Davison, "Effects of Silicone Treatments on properties of Bricks," National Research Council of Canada, Internal Report No. 303 of the Division of Building Research Ottawa August 1964.
[111] Corbett, 2011, DVD.
[112] Eichorn, 2011, cat. 50, cat. 51.
[113] Examples of these include: *Untitled*, 1981; *1-2-3-4-5*, 1984; *Untitled,* 1985; *Black Flowers,* 1984; *Organic Abstraction*, 1986; and *Allegorical Landscape*, 1987. See Eichorn, 2011, cat. 54, cat. 56, cat.58, cat.67, cat. 68, cat. 73.

electric and gas firings.[114] Each series was displayed as a geometrical shape: square, rectangle or even a triangle. He also continued to experiment with large-scale ceramic sculptural tile murals from the mid-1980s until the end of that decade, using the cylindrical dies he had made in 1977.[115] Major works include: freestanding wall for the Waterloo Potters Workshop, Waterloo, Ontario, 1986; *Air, Earth, Water and Fire,* mural for the Group Entrance of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Québec; and *Fire Light*, 1989 that received the grand prize in the design category at the Second International Ceramic Competition, Mino Japan.[116] Success of the Sturdy-Stone project encouraged Sures to continue his monumental mural experiments, to delve into the power of the arrangement and re-arrangement of repetitive design elements, and to apply the results to large projects that required much organization and imagination. From the Sturdy Stone mural he also learned to budget time, money and materials, to be ready for the bureaucracy, and gained experience in what to expect regarding architectural and building code requirements. This knowledge became particularly important for *Air, Earth, Water and Fire*, once again an exterior mural for a government commission.

Sures' successful completion of the Sturdy-Stone mural, along with his vessel work, university teaching, participation in local, national and international exhibitions and conferences, merited him the Saskatchewan Crafts Council nomination for the prestigious national Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in the Crafts in 2005. However, as Sures has recently ironically remarked, his prolific and varied output that included monumental murals as well as intimate functional vessels, employing figurative, organic abstract and geometric imagery, has been enough to confound the award's jurors who have decided that his output was too varied.[117] The mural can therefore be understood to have enhanced Sures's reputation as a ceramicist while ironically limiting his recognition because of the withholding of the highest national award for craft. In 1991 Sures became a Member of the Order of Canada, and in 1992 was elected as a member of International Academy of Ceramics. Other honours include the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, 2003 and the Commemorative Medal for the Centennial of Saskatchewan, 2006.

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[114] Corbett, 2011, DVD.
[115] Specifications for a nine-foot diameter mural commission from the Co-operators Insurance Company in Regina, Commissions Sturdy Stone Provincial Office Building, Correspondence 1977-79, Box 6 File 48, Jack Sures Fonds 99-38, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[116] Krueger, "Chronology," in Virginia Eichorn, 2011, 191.
[117] Jack Sures unpublished remarks at the conference accompanying *Tactile Desires: The Work of Jack Sures,* 24 Sept. 2011.

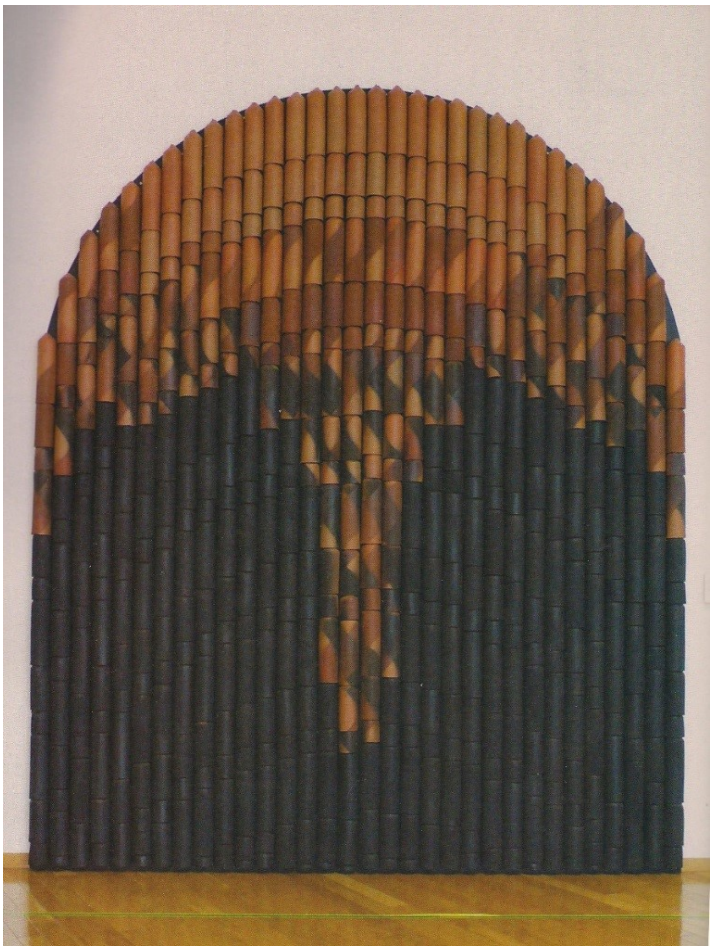

Figure 68: *Fire Light,* Jack Sures, 1989, Mino Japan.

Figure 69: *Air, Earth, Water, and Fire,* detail, Jack Sures, 1989, Group entrance, Canadian Museum of History

Conclusion

Situated above the main entrance of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, Sures' mural has become its easily photographed "face" because it looks onto a wide street, its view unimpeded by facing buildings or trees. This monumental ceramic relief advertised the Saskatchewan government as an arts patron knowledgeable of current aesthetic movements and supportive of a particular Saskatchewan visual arts vocabulary. It proclaimed the professional competency of Saskatchewan's ceramic practitioners, making visible the viability of the integration of arts and architecture and the range of stylistic diversity. Studio pottery and potters had risen to the occasion against a variety of odds and proven themselves exceptionally competent.

Sures' approach to his material, tools, and labour was quite different from that of Woolsey and Hardy. As sole designer, Sures had complete control over the process, its failure and ultimate success. He was initially involved with the clay in a "ready-to-hand" manner, as he was familiar with its properties and skilled in its manipulation, a relationship attained only through experiencing clay as "present-to-hand" in his earlier murals. As such, the process of the "coming-to-mind" of the clay, and apparatus in this case, led to design improvisation of tools and procedures, in turn creating labour and economic modification.[119] His equipment, including the extruder and kiln, were design adaptations he initiated, as were the later moulds. The relatively efficient performance of the extruder was as he envisioned, and he was able to initially exploit its capabilities. This relationship however came asunder when the shapes cracked in the firing and the hypothetical water froze and the potential birds nested. Here, Sures's design capabilities were challenged and his relationship with the extruder and its dies greatly diminished. While Sures had developed an efficient system, it, in turn, changed Sures who had to abandon it and look to another solution, one dependent as well upon his ability to hire a skilled labour force and perform his teaching schedule. The mural and the tools Sures designed for the project were involved in co-shaping mechanisms with the people involved in their manipulation, and those who worked for him were transformed through the process in a variety of ways. For instance, Charley Farrero, one of Sures' workers became committed to public sculpture.[120] Through

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[119]Bjørnar Olsen, *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects,* (Lanham Maryland; New York; Toronto; Plymouth, U.K.: Ultamira Press, 2010), 164.

[120] Charley Farrero, "Public Sculptures, Prairie Design Group," Charley Farrero: Sculptural Works, accessed 20 March 2012, http://www.farrero.ca/webpdg/pdgmain.html.

working in a group, the pride in the execution of the mural extended over a greater population base, as all participants each with their own personal connections broadcast awareness of it and their participation. Such formation and reformation of a variety of groups consisting of human and non-human elements, including nesting pigeons, freezing water and thawing ice, and even kiln chimney height, were key agents in the final form and colour of this Sturdy-Stone mural. "Symbolic Wheel" was a result of skill, not just considered as effective manipulation of "mere matter" or tools, but as a combination of working with and through materials such as clay, plaster, salts, fire, and air, coupled with time, money, people, and space management and equipment design improvisation.

Tracing the group formations reveal how local cultural references, economic bases, and educational practices combine with those from other regions of the world, and even ceramic practices of other times to build the mural. The Canada Council funding and university sabbaticals facilitated Sures' travels that put him in contact with European and Japanese ceramic cultures he then incorporated into this mural. How the mural is understood today depends upon shifting global migrations influenced by Canadian immigrant strategies and First Nation political and economic power. As a commission to represent Saskatchewan to Saskatoon, it portrays the province within a global community and the global community as part of Saskatoon.

CHAPTER SIX

EVOKING A RESPONSE: *UNTITLED,* 1977 AND *UNTITLED,* 1982, LORRAINE MALACH

Introduction

The interior murals in the Sturdy-Stone Centre provoke an entirely different kind of encounter than the exterior murals, one more intimate because of their dimensions and proximity to the viewer. Lorraine Malach's *Untitled*, 1977 is the first mural one comes across after entering from the main west door. This one ton, ten foot square (304.8 cm x 304.8 cm.) abstract work, glazed in blues and yellows, was described in the *Arts West* review as "dynamic, visceral, complex, blending musical and organic elements in a writhing tangle of rhythmic, repeated shapes."[1] Malach also created a mural for the space above the five elevators in the eighth floor lobby during the second round of commissions. *Untitled,* 1982 is a figurative work in two sections, one nine metres in length and the other six metres. [2]

In this chapter I pay particular attention to the murals and their audience in terms of the "way things *articulate themselves* – and to our own somatic competence of listening to, and responding to, their call." This entails acknowledging the significance of "the actual form or material substance" of the murals in their communication to us.[3] At the same time, I recognize the relational web in which these murals are enmeshed, highlighting how their particular properties as things and materials inflect out cohabitation with them. Notably I undertake a feminist reading of Malach's murals, as these are the only ceramic relief murals in the Sturdy-Stone Centre that were executed by a woman. As the title suggests, this chapter relies on the voices of a multitude of women, aside from Malach and the author, women who wrote about the conditions of production and reception of artworks in Saskatchewan and particularly the murals at the time of their execution. This chapter situates Malach's murals within a feminist art history, looking at them in terms of feminist strategies and debates of the time, as well as within a history of public relief sculpture and applied art made by women in Canada. In this sense, this is a

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[1] Ruth Wright Miller, "Saskatoon," *Arts West* 4, no.6 (Sept/Oct.1979), 10.
[2] Sheila Robertson, "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone," *Star-Phoenix*, (March 1983), Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[3] Bjørner Olsen, *In Defence of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects,* (Lantham Maryland: Altamira Press, 2010), 62, 157.

recuperative project. Recognition of Malach's murals as a woman's production is crucial: despite the number of women potters and ceramicists participating at the amateur and professional levels at this time, not only in Saskatchewan but throughout Canada, very few were awarded large commissions such as the Sturdy-Stone murals, and even fewer continued in this field.[4] A woman's presence in the Sturdy-Stone Centre underscores the high level of professionalism achieved by women ceramicists at this time. Canadian art historian Janice Anderson understood Canadian women's painted murals as "political acts, the making of which has marked women's presence in public both in the literal interpretation of the word, and in the symbolic sense in which incursions into the public arena signify an insistence upon inclusion."[5] I suggest this applies to Malach's Sturdy-Stone Centre ceramic murals.

By looking at these murals through a feminist lens I configure the interrelationship between the architectural space and the ceramic mural as critical spatial practice, proposed by architecture historian, Jane Rendell. This interdisciplinary approach intermingles a sociological discussion of physical and discursive spaces with one of encounter. I turn to material culture studies to reinstate the object as a thing in itself, whose formal characteristics and how it was made are taken into account. The importance of the object was also a concern of Latour who admonitions us in writing an ANT account of a work of art to take into consideration the work itself.[6] Work as an object cannot be disentangled from work as process. Bjørner Olsen shares this concern "for the properties possessed by the material world itself" and encourages us to realize we are not "dealing with entities that […] just sit in silence waiting to be embodied with socially constituted meanings, but possess their own unique qualities and competences which they bring to our cohabitation (and co-constitution) with them."[7] Rather that creating a formal analysis of the murals to make aesthetic evaluations, or one that ignores the power of the work to impact its audience, I write this account to acknowledge how the murals create connections among people and things within this space, and what these connections might be. The description

[4] Sandra Alfoldy, *The Allied Arts: Architecture and Craft in Postwar Canada,* (Montreal & Kingston, 2012); Gail Crawford, *Studio Ceramics in Canada: 1920-2005*, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2005).
[5] Janice Anderson, "Creating Room: Canadian Women's Mural Painting and Rereadings of the Public and Private," PhD Dissertation, Concordia University, Montreal Quebec, 2002, 3.
[6] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 236.
[7] Bjørnar Olsen, "Scenes From a Troubled Engagement: Post-structuralism and Material Culture Studies," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer, (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2006), 92.

of how these objects came to be as well as how they function constitute an important dimension of my argument as I address the co-constitution of Malach, the murals, and their publics. This recognizes gender as a powerful actant in the coming-into-being of the murals, in their immediate reception, and in their present relevance. Because gender is traced as a mediator within its own web of connections, the political potential of ANT is reaffirmed.

An Invitation to Touch: Untitled, 1977

Site and Location

Malach's mural is mounted on the north wall of the lobby, a transitional space between the urban exterior and the interior spaces of business and governance. It mediates between the exterior and other interior murals, visually modulating the shift between the vastness of the outside space and the smaller enclosed spaces within the building, accompanied by shifting mural visual vocabulary. The two-story, twenty-eight foot high lobby is formed by the main entranceway, the conjunction of two lateral passages, and elevator lobby that exits to the parking area on the east side of the building.[8] Positioned against the wall where the four passages converge is the main information and security desk within easy surveillance distance of the mural. Seating is currently placed so visitors are faced away from the mural towards the opposite blank wall, and because the chairs are moveable, there is a strong possibility the mural will be damaged if they are inadvertently pushed against it.[9] This current arrangement blocks visual and tactile access to the mural and makes it function as a backdrop to the people in the chairs, rather than as a focus of attention and contemplation, as Anita Aarons envisioned the role of the applied arts. This was not always the case for the murals, and the current seating arrangement modifies the mural's program of action, diminishing its ability to interact with the viewer.

The only illumination of *Untitled* 1977 is natural lighting from the west-facing doors and artificial light high in the two-story lobby ceiling. The angles of the mural's undulating shapes and the distribution and proportion of the colours of the mural were chosen to take advantage of natural lighting from the main floor doors and the second floor windows above the entrance

[8] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Lorraine Malach, 1" Box 5 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[9] Damage to Gathie Falk's ceramic mural, *Veneration of the White Collar Worker Nos 1 & 2*, 1973 in the cafeteria of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was incurred due to people pushing their chairs away from the tables into the mural. Alfoldy, 2012, 144, 147-48.

doors, before these were blocked in renovations to create more second floor office space.[10] In 2009 when the Saskatchewan Craft Council organized a celebration for the thirtieth anniversary of the Sturdy-Stone Centre's opening, the mural was lit with a mercury vapour light that absorbed its colour so that the blue palette was reduced to shades of dull brown. This unfortunate state of affairs was subsequently corrected through the initiative of the Downtown Business Improvement District Association. Errors in lighting, and in the seating arrangements effectively modify interplay between forms and colours in the mural, and restrict public interaction: this diminishes the mural's ability to engage with people. Chairs facing the mural would allow it to perform its task more efficiently and would highlight the need for good lighting. The transition of the building's use particularly affected the kinds of relations the mural could develop with its audience.

Figure 70: *Untitled,* Lorraine Malach 1979,lobby mural looking to main west doors, 2011

[10] Photo of the installed mural in 1979, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

Figure 71: lobby mural shortly after installation showing natural lighting

The ochre and blue tones of the lobby mural repeat the colour scheme of the supporting wall, a polished concrete with pebbles, and the hexagonal floor tiles coloured in slate and terra cotta tones. Because of the similarity in colours the mural does not stand in stark contrast to the wall but seems to grow from it. Such an organic relationship between art and architecture is antithetical to that between the modern painting and the white wall, which depends upon contrast between two surfaces, a relationship replicated in the exterior murals. This mural suggests another approach to the integration of art and architecture: with its undulating and highly patterned three-dimensional forms emerging from the similarly coloured wall, the mural appears to merge with the building and emerge from its surface. On the lower right, the mural is prominently signed with a flourish, "Lorraine, 77," the brown letters carved in a uniform width into the clay body and glazed to stand out against the pale blue surface. Beside it a small bronze plaque provides the customary information related to artworks: *Untitled,* Lorraine Malach, 1979. The brass government plaque effectively competes with the date inscribed in the mural. The dates appear to recognize two different stages in the mural's biography: from Malach's view as the maker, they were dated from her completion of the sculpted and glazed surfaces in 1977; however, from the government's view the work was only contractually completed when it became attached to the building, and the 1979 date recognizes the transfer of ownership.

Because the lobby mural is the only ceramic relief in the building accessible to its audience at eye and touch level, I turn to sculpture historian, Alex Potts who adapted Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach, primarily concerned with everyday encounters, to the extra-ordinary encounter with sculpture in a structured space such as a museum or gallery.[11] As applied art in a public building, *Untitled* 1979 can be understood as a fusion of these two encounters. Within the lobby space, the mural might only be noticed peripherally, an indistinct and unfocussed recognition, but according to Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa, this kind of encounter counteracts the alienation of modern architecture experienced as "poverty in the field of peripheral vision." [12] Even a peripheral encounter centres us within the lobby space. In contrast to this kind of encounter is the focussed one that allows us to define ourselves in space in other ways. As Potts suggests, the extra-ordinariness of sculpture often causes our gaze to linger, "noticing the different aspects the work presents and the unstable, shifting sense we have of its immediate appearance."[13] These encounters are not restricted to the visual, but acknowledge "the kinaesthetic and tactile dimensions of experience" arising from our awareness of the space in which we are situated and which we negotiate. Pallasmaa points out that modern architecture's privileging of sight has "left the body and the other senses, as well as our memories, imaginations and dreams homeless."[14] This abstract and sensual mural provides a home for dreams and imaginings. The Sturdy-Stone Centre, however, is not only a physical space, but also a discursive one, charged with the exercise of political power by the government through its social and judicial agencies. Whether users of the space engage with the lobby mural as a peripheral object or focus upon it, *Untitled* restores a human dimension to this space. The transition of the Sturdy-Stone Centre from a multi-use building to one solely concerned with government bureaucracy inflects how the mural is encountered, and the prominence of the security desk with its power of surveillance certainly discourages a tactile engagement. The mural, then, should be understood as a "multistable" object, subject to changing conditions of the building's interior layout, use, inhabitants and clientele.[15]

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[11] Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 211.
[12] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*, (West Sussex England" Wiley-Academy, 2005), 13.
[13] Potts, 2000, 219.
[14] Pallasmaa, 2005, 19.
[15] Peter-Paul Verbeek, *What Things Do: Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency and Design,* trans. Robert P. Crease, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 179.

Figure 72: *Untitled* lobby mural, 1979, detail showing forms, glazes, and ornament

Figure 73: detail showing depth and ornament of *Untitled* lobby mural

Malach's high relief sculpture that extends eighteen inches (45 cm.) from the surface is an object that makes its presence felt.[16] Potts proposes that:

> [by] focussing our attention on the actual material and visual properties of its surfaces and its literal occupancy of space as distinct from what it might represent as image, a sculpture often does activate a mode of viewing that puts into abeyance a straightforward recognition of it as an inert object or array of objects it literally is.[17]

Such a sculptural encounter is tied with a concept of temporality necessary to realize and synthesize multiple viewing points, and the more complex and multifaceted the forms and surfaces, the more time becomes a factor. The interrelationship between space and time suggests a way of engaging with the world "where one's attention is absorbed by surfaces and substances." [18] Furthermore, as we negotiate towards, away from, and around the relief sculpture considering its formal aspects, our attention to the sculptural body is paralleled by a reciprocal attention to our own and others' bodies, including other Sturdy-Stone visitors and the omnipresent security. I suggest that the location, scale, surface, and design treatment of this lobby mural work in concert as an invitation to explore the interface of architectural space and mural surfaces and thus reinsert the human scale into this vast lobby space. In contrast to the exterior monumental murals, accessible only visually and from a distance, Malach's *Untitled* re-establishes the human contact inherent in craft practice and consumption. As Alfoldy argues for Micheline Beauchemin's 1968 woven hanging, *A-B 1*, in the Ontario Government's MacDonald Block and Gathie Falk's 1979 *Beautiful B.C. Multi-Purpose Thermal Blanket* in Vancouver's Credit Union Central of British Columbia, Malach's mural uses the touch factor to reinforce the human dimension in these vast modern architectural spaces.[19] Arthur Danto suggests monumentality in ceramics not only challenges ceramics as a craft material tied to function, it also "underscores the smallness and vulnerability of those who experience it."[20] This wonder and awe is tied, not to Kant's pure aesthetics, but to the mastery involved in the execution of the work, called by Alfred Gell, "the technology of enchantment."[21] The viewer's "[c]aptivation or

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[16] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy-Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Lorraine Malach, 1," Box 5 2005-53 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[17] Potts, 2000, 233.
[18] Ibid, 218-19, 222, 221.
[19] Alfoldy, 2012*,* 84-86.
[20] Arthur Coleman Danto, "Visionary Ceramics," *American Ceramics* 14, no. 2 (Oct. 2007): 26.
[21] Alfred Gell, "Technology and Magic," *Anthropology Today,* 4, no.2 (April 1988): 7.

fascination… [is] produced by the spectacle of unimaginable virtuosity." For some this may be skill; for others "the complexity of the artist's decision-making process."[22] *Untitled* 1977 extends beyond the span of a person's arms,[23] but to this writer, who is also a ceramicist, it is also enchanting, and the haptic encounter with the work restores a human connection with this admirable object. The objective nature of the world is challenged and the object and subject can become mutually constructed through surfaces of multi-sensory contact.[24]

Figure 74: *Untitled*, lobby mural, 1979, detail showing form, glazes, and ornament

[22] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 72.
[23] Alfoldy discusses this "human scale" in terms of da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man," still taught as part of architectural scholarship. Alfoldy, 2012, 64.
[24] Potts, 2000, 222. Merleau-Ponty developed this most fully in *Phenomenology of Perception*. See also Verbeek, 2005, 147.

The lobby mural's dynamic visual content takes time and cannot be grasped from one viewing point. A variety of biomorphic forms arch, thrust, and stretch across the paler blue surface. Abstract musical instruments and floral and animal forms intertwine, emerge from, and recede into the surface, enlivened by intricate interwoven organic patterns and shapes. While the larger shapes determine the overall compositional strategies and guide eye movements across the mural's surfaces, the smaller detailed elements encourage the viewer's gaze to linger and explore hidden recesses from a variety of angles. Constant discoveries are made as we shift our attention from one set of patterns or forms to another, metaphorically picking up and turning over the multiple and complex examples of life forms within our reach. Even the "musical instruments" imply they must be physically engaged and "played" to reach their full potential. The mural's high relief undulating surface contrasts with the angular forms and sharp edges of the building's interior, a correction or complement to the industrial nature of modernist architecture, inserting living and growing forms into an urban concrete space. In a space dominated by flat surfaces and angles, the mural is a sensual intervention.

Why Malach?

Malach received this commission as part of the initial 1976 commissioning process. Ellemers, who knew Malach well, and who was already in possession of one of her Polish Coffin Covers made a decade earlier, chose her to be among the fifteen ceramicists asked to submit a proposal.[25] Malach had an impressive artistic pedigree, as her first teachers in the early 1950s in Regina were Art McKay and Kenneth Lockhead.[26] In 1954, encouraged by Lockhead, she pursued her art education at his alma mater, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Barnes Foundation in Pennsylvania, where her excellent performance ensured tuition scholarships and travel awards for continued studies in Europe.[27] Malach was particularly interested in mural painting in which she specialized during her last academic year, and upon returning to Regina, she built a solid reputation in Saskatchewan as an artist, teaching, exhibiting, and undertaking commissions. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s she taught for a selection of art societies in several Saskatchewan cities including Yorkton, Swift Current, and

[25] James Ellemers, telephone interview with the author, 21 April 2008.
[26] Charles R. Watall, "Lorraine Malach: To Make the Incomprehensible Intelligible…" *Arts West* 2, no. 4 (1976): 23.
[27] Ibid, 23; Lorraine Malach CV, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

the summer school for the arts in Fort Qu'Appelle. She also taught in city-sponsored adult extension programs in Regina, and at the University of Saskatchewan Regina Campus for the School of the Arts. Between 1970 and 1976 Malach was awarded three materials grants from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. She was also known through her participation in several touring exhibitions that travelled in Ontario and throughout the western provinces, and for her 1972 portrait of Saskatchewan premier, Woodrow Lloyd, (d. 1972).[28] The Saskatchewan Arts Board acquired nine of Malach's enamel and ceramic on wood sculptures, *The Polish Coffin Cover Series*, 1968, six of which are now on display at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina.[29] Between 1956 and 1976, eight articles about Malach's paintings and ceramics appeared in the provincial newspapers, *Leader-Post,* Regina *and StarPhoenix,* Saskatoon, and the magazine, *Arts West.* Small catalogues accompanied a 1964 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Regina Public Library, a 1975 solo exhibition at the Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, and a 1976 group exhibition at the Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery.[30] In 1975 she was included in the third edition of Colin S. MacDonald's *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists,* Vol. 4, 1975.[31] She was a highly regarded and recognized Saskatchewan professional artist.

Malach's figurative vocabulary was based upon the structural principles tied to early twentieth century European modernism. This preference can at least partially be attributed to her education at The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts that celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1954, the year Malach arrived. As *Time* magazine noted, until about thirty years previously "almost every eminent figure in American art had been an academy teacher or student," and the prestigious nature of this institution was implied in all press discussions of Malach's works. *Time* evaluated the education received there as "a well-rounded course in fine arts," however, it did point out male models still posed in loincloths, and according to Malach, the students did

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[28] Premier Lloyd, 1961-1965 had succeeded Tommy Douglas as the head of the provincial CCF and is best remembered for instituting the first student loan and bursary program in Canada as Education Minister under Douglas, and implementing Douglas' medicare program in 1962, the first national health care program in Canada. Dianne Lloyd Norton, "Lloyd, Woodrow Stanley (1913–72)," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 7 Feb. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/lloyd_woodrow_stanley_1913-72.html.

[29] "Polish Coffin Covers, 1968," by Lorraine Malach, Saskatchewan Arts Board Collection, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[30] "Lorraine Malach. 1-23 March Solo Exhibition, Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery," Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Carol A. Phillips, "Changes: 11 Artists Working on the Prairies," in Mackenzie Art Gallery, *Changes: 11 Artists Working on the Prairies* Regina, (MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1976).

[31] Janell Ranae Rempel and Aimee Keyowski, "Bibliography: Lorraine Malach," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making,* ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2005), 115.

anatomy drawings from casts and studied reproductions. [32] The nearby Barnes Foundation augmented her education through frequent opportunities to examine early modernist European works, and was also consistently mentioned as a highly regarded art institution in Malach's press clippings.[33] Malach was trained within the principles of the Western canon, which she embraced and mastered, but that also distanced her from the non-representational post-war European and American avant-gardes.[34] This adherence to modernist representational art is associated with her strong Catholic beliefs and the Church's policy developed during the 1950s and 1960s through Vatican II, regarding acceptable religious art privileging the depiction of the human body within an early twentieth-century modernist vocabulary.[35] Malach studied Tibetan, Egyptian, Greek, and African art in Philadelphia, and the "large rounded solid forms of Chinese sculpture, notably with heads, necks and bodies sculpted into one solid form" in New York.[36] She was also curious about Cambodian Buddha sculptures, the sensual circular arc patterns, scrollwork vines, and colour in Persian art, as well as Japanese woodcuts.[37] Her comments on European art indicate an eclectic mix of interests including attraction to the Romanesque, early Renaissance,

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[32] The academy's celebratory exhibition held when Malach was a student included prominent American artists such as Charles Peale, Benjamin West, John Marin, as well as George Caleb Bingham, Mary Cassatt, and Robert Henri, George Luks, Everett Shinn, John Sloan and William Glackens of the Ashcan School of realism. "Art: Who's Who in Philadelphia," Time Magazine 65, no.6, (Monday, February 7, 1955), accessed 10 Oct. 2010, http://0-web.ebscohost.com.mercury.concordia.ca/ehost/detail?vid=4&sid=67e4fa34-ee47-41bb-aa63-b795168f7412%40sessionmgr10&hid=1&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=54179540; Lorraine Malach letter to her parents, March 1, 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[33] Established in 1922 by art collector Albert C. Barnes, the collection includes an impressive array of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and early Modern paintings, as well as important examples of African sculpture, and American decorative arts. "Collection," The Barnes Foundation, accessed 10 May, 2014, http://www.barnesfoundation.org/collections/art-collection/.

[34] Letter from Malach to her parents, 8 January 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection. "Right now I have been waging a one man internal war with all the so-called intellectual art – 'You never can tell' so many people say – but I think you can – There is so much bunk – junk in art shows today it leaves a person disgusted."

[35] See for example: Raphael Hume et al, "Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting, April 2, 1951" *Liturgical Arts* 19, no.3 (May 1951): 55-62. The general topic was "The Problem of Decoration in Church Buildings". Peter Larisey, S.J. "Church Art and Church Architecture – Wanted Advice," *Canadian Art* 12, no.1 (Jan. Feb.1965): 12-13; Peter Larisey, S.J., "Enriching the Spiritual Life," *Canadian Art* 23, no.102 (July 1966): 38-41; Marcos Barbosa O.S.B., "Sacred Art," in *The Liturgy of Vatican ii: A Symposium in Two Volumes,* ed. William Baraúna, English edition, Jovian Lang, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), 255.

[36] Lorraine Malach letter to her parents, 24 March, 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Lorraine Malach, diary entry 28 February 1961, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[37] Lorraine Malach, diary entry 28 February 1961, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Lorraine Malach letter to her parents, 3 February 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection. Malach often used this technique in creating her annual Christmas cards and a woodcut, *Christ in Cosmos,* appeared as the cover design for Jacob Kutarna, *The Way: A Guide for Inquirers into the Catholic Faith,* (Regina: Catholic Centre, 1968), Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

Impressionists, post-Impressionists, while later work shows experiments in cubism.[38] These preferences informed her ceramic art that she began to develop during the early 1960s, and link her ceramic murals to a long history of European painting, non-Western sculpture and Western ceramics.

As a student Malach initially was attracted to clay to better understand sculptural form in painting, rather than from a desire to create ceramic sculptures, an interest in the functional object, or need to deconstruct ceramic or sculpture histories. She was introduced to clay through the European sculptural tradition, as a sketching material for exploring the figure, rather than through the vessel tradition familiar to the Regina clay community and embedded within the aesthetics and philosophy of Asian-inspired British ceramics.[39] She and a fellow student lugged sixty pounds of clay home from the Pennsylvania Academy to work late Saturday nights modelling each other. She called clay a "funny medium – and sculpture was a bit harder because you work not only from one side on a 2 dimensional surface but all around in 3-D. You even have to look on top and underneath."[40] In all her murals Malach invited her viewers to replicate this action of discovery by including hidden patterns and objects only evident if the viewer does look underneath and around corners. After she returned to Saskatchewan, she increasingly developed a volumetric approach to the figure in her two-dimensional work and her sculptural clay forms, but also complemented this by exploring surface texture and colour patterning throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Such interplay between form and pattern was developed through trial and error, seen in several substantial ceramic relief mural commissions designed for religious and secular spaces during this period.[41] In one trajectory of her work, Malach moved

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[38] Malach letters to her parents 1954-1957, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Brother Tessier in conversation with the author, Lumsden Sask., 31 Aug. 2010. An undated and untitled Malach painting in Tessier's possession had been rescued from a flooded basement. In 1975 she exhibited a Cubist-based oil painting, *The Cellist,* in a traveling exhibition at the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery. Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery *Changes: 11 Artists Working on the Prairies,* (Regina: Norman Mackenzie Art gallery, 1975), 20-21, 30.

[39] The dissemination of early twentieth century sculpture practice in clay is discussed in Ann Compton, "Plastic Pleasures: Reconsidering the Practice of Modeling through the Manuals of Sculpture Technique," *Journal of Modern Craft* 3, no.3 (Nov. 2010): 309-324.

[40] Lorraine Malach letter to her parents, 3 Feb. 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[41] Commissions for the Catholic Church included *Stations of the Cross,* St. Michael's Retreat House, c1963; *Spring and Summer* and *Fall and Winter*, St. Michael's Retreat House, c1970; Mural, Catholic Information Centre Regina, 1970; Altarpiece, Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish church, Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, 1973; Mural, Plains Hospital, Regina, 1975; and Mural, Franciscan Friary, Edmonton, 1976-1977. As well she created secular ceramic murals such as *The Bride*, 1968, Mackenzie Art Gallery, *Studio Door*, 1968, *Growing Forms*, pre1971, and *For Ena*, 1976, in the Connaught Public Library, Regina. Lorraine Malach CV, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Mackenzie Art Gallery, Malach, Lorraine, *The Bride*, 1968, the Mackenzie Art accessed 15 May, 2013, http://www.mackenzieartgallery.ca/discover/items/5519/the-bride; MacKenzie Art Gallery, Malach, Lorraine, *Studio*

away from narrative content, abstracting forms and patterns of the vegetative world to create dense intermingled surfaces, disrupting the figure/ground separation. On three-dimensional ceramic surfaces she explored the interplay of volume, glaze and surface patterns that simultaneously broke up and unified forms. Early striking examples of Malach's explorations with pattern, colour, and form are *The Bride*, 1968, and her series of nine *Polish Coffin Covers*, 1968, Conexus Auditorium, Regina, that humorously referred to her imagined Polish ancestors.[42] These patterns referenced the importance of the designs found in the decorative arts of the Polish-Canadian community in which she was raised.[43] By doing so it anchored her works in an increasingly important discourse about the expression of ethnicity and the role of multiculturalism that was emerging at the national and provincial levels, and publicly declared her attachment to her Polish heritage. Malach was among those economically and culturally well-established second and third generation immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s who became spokespeople for their communities. For fifteen years prior to the Sturdy-Stone commissions, Malach's fusion of sculpture and painting challenged the modernist art world's renunciation of ornament and its trivialization of decoration.

Door, 1968, wood, ceramic, glaze, brass on plywood, 196.8 x 76.2 x 17.5 cm, collection of the MacKenzie Art Gallery, gift of Donald and Claire Kramer. 2008-091, accessed 15 May 2013, http://www.mackenzieartgallery.ca/discover/items/5521/studio-door; *Regina Clay: World in the Making*, Artworks, Lorraine Malach, *Growing Forms,* 107 x 17.8 x 8 cm, stoneware, abstract sculpture, pre1971, Collection of Beth Hone, accessed 15 Oct. 2010, http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/regina/_gallery/Malach-growing/.

[42] "Unusual Display at Gallery," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 20 April 1968. This article reviews an Art Show at the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, April 14-May 4 1968, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[43] Jake Kutarna interview with the author, Lumsden Sask., 31 Aug. 2010; Syl Kramer interview with the author, Calgary, 6 Sept. 2010; Lorraine Malach letter to her mother, 18 January. 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Roy Hodsman, ed., *Archdiocese of Regina: A History, Our Roots,* (Regina: Archdiocese of Regina, 1988). Malach participated in St. Anthony's Catholic Church Polish youth organizations as a teenager, and as a young art student in Philadelphia she had wished to return to the prairies to decorate St. Anthony's Church with Polish motifs. Lorraine Malach letter to her mother c. 1955, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Kutarna, 31 Aug. 2010.

Figure 75: *The Bride*, Lorraine Malach, 1968

Ellemers was aware that Malach's approach to clay was in fact quite different from many other ceramicists working in and around Regina in the 1960s and 1970s. She had not embraced the Leach inspired vessel-making tradition nor the funk or kitsch approach of the Regina Ceramicists, rejecting as silly and facile the idea of teapots that strained to look like an animal or a vegetable.[44] These deconstructive approaches to ceramics in Regina have been linked to an acute awareness of art, gender and class politics among the ceramic community, but because Malach did not use these particular strategies it should not suggest she was unconcerned with the

[44] Malach commented on a 1984 teapot show where the teapots were related to zoo animals and backyard gardens: "I suppose the intellectual leap one was required to make from a camel to the act of pouring from its mouth was of considerable proportion and therefore to be equated with spiritual insight." She then went on to link this type of object to "the democratization of the arts." Lorraine Malach, letter to Dolores Kramer 1984, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

politics of representation or politically and socially unaware. She was aware of issues regarding regionalism as well as the dangers of isolationism that accompanied it.[45] While members of the Regina Ceramicists were receiving international exposure in Paris through works whose subject matter was based on a specific, usually gendered and classed, Saskatchewan experience, Malach resisted what she considered this insular approach:

> The west is coming into its own at last but unfortunately at the expense of isolating area from area. The east has become the mysterious east but the shoe is on the other foot – there are many who don't give too hoots about eastern culture sanction and have decided to proceed without it. I suppose insularity is a way to begin to grow towards embracing the whole as one must know self before being able to embrace others but the leaning here is towards isolationism which is something else.[46]

Malach's rejection of an isolationist culture through her use of an international language of figurative abstraction merged well with the architectural vocabulary of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, that itself was situated within an international movement.

Awareness of the formal elements in the mural, such as "color, light, line, space and composition, as well as space for the work, its purpose and community values" ensured, if these were appropriately addressed, that Malach could act as an absent agent through the mural to affect the public in the lobby.[47] Her communication about the importance of discovery by careful exploration of her surfaces is an example of how a program of action inscribed in an object by a human agent ensures the object becomes an agent directing human behaviour. Her manipulation of the formal elements through her handling of the clay, glazes, tools and kiln, in other words her skill, had a direct impact on the mural's embodied intention and its ability to direct responses. Malach's public murals were not overtly socially or politically confrontational, rather she contextualized them as emotional vehicles, meant to uplift people as they proceeded through their day. She explained:

> That's the good thing about murals. You're offering them to the largest number of people possible, people you wouldn't necessarily meet in the course of your life. When you have a mural in a public place and people go by and see them, you're giving them a booster

[45] Malach complained about the dominance of central Canada in the media remarking, "The Maritimes people complain as much as the Westerners do about being relegated to no man's land when the CBC talks of things Canadian." Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, 5 April 1976, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[46] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores and Syl Kramer, 8 May 1974, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[47] Lorraine Malach quoted in Deana Driver, "To Evoke a Response," *The United Church Observer,* Special Edition on the Arts, (December 1985), Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

> shot for the day. They don't have to go to a gallery. They can be out shopping and see something beautiful and say, 'Wow, life is pretty great, isn't it?' [48]

Malach's friend, Charles Watrall, explained that her "images function as a springboard to trigger essential and emotional responses," representing that which is beyond analysis.[49] While this remark could be understood as a purely aesthetic response to art in the tradition of Kant, I suggest as Olsen argues that it "acknowledges the otherness of things and of materiality as providing a distinct sphere of experience." This approach endorses the power of the polysemic object by recognizing the ineffectiveness of the writing/thing binary in Western thought.[50]

Malach accumulated her ceramic knowledge through contact with other ceramicists in the area, notably David Ross and Folmer Hansen who founded the Hansen-Ross studio in 1961 in Fort Qu'Appelle,[51] and Ann James and Beth Hone who established the Hone-James Studio in 1968 in Regina.[52] In the Hansen-Ross studio she developed large-scale ceramic sculpture techniques making life-size figures, firing completed pieces in their kiln until 1970, and later used the Hone-James studio gas kiln in Regina until it closed in 1976.[53] She was proficient in working with a variety of light to dark-coloured cone six clays (about 1220 C°), and while the brighter clear colours in her relief tiles worked best in oxidation atmospheres, this could be hard to reliably achieve in a shared gas kiln. In 1976 Claire Watrall, herself a potter, asked Malach to help test white and dark (red) sculpture clays citing her as an expert with her "monumental experience (figuratively and literally) with sculptural clays." Malach evaluated these clay samples for fitness for large or small sculptural works, plasticity, suitability for over-handling when working out sculptural ideas, and appropriateness for detailed modelling.[54] She studied glazes to develop particular colours and textural effects using slips, her own formulated glazes,

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[48] Elaine Carlson, "Lorraine Malach: Between Commissions," *Regina This Month,* (June 1982): 6.
[49] Charles Watrall, 1976, 23.
[50] Olsen, 2006, 96, 97.
[51] Wylie Simmonds and Linda Elder, "Hansen-Ross," *Arts West* 1, no.3 (March/April 1976): 24.
[52] Julia Krueger, "A Feminist Lens on Six female Ceramists in Regina," in Long, 2005, 53.
[53] "Guest Post by Julia Krueger: Hansen-Ross Pottery – Pioneering Fine Craft in the Canadian Prairies;" Musing About Mud, accessed 8 May 2013. http://musingaboutmud.blogspot.ca/2012/09/guest-post-by-julia-krueger-hansen-ross.html ; Lorraine Malach CV, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection. Works completed with Hansen-Ross include *Spring Summer* and *Fall Winter* in St. Michael's Retreat House. Lumsden, and the exterior mural on the Catholic Information Centre, Regina; Beth Hone left the Hone –James studio in 1973 when she moved to Lumsden. Ann James continued to run the studio on her own until she returned to England in 1976. "Beth Hone" and "Ann James" in Long, 2005, 120.
[54] Claire Watrall, "Minnesota Clays," *Saskatchewan Craft Council News* 1, no. 4 (Oct. 1976): 20.

and commercial glazes on a range of clays she had encountered.[55] When Malach no longer had access to either of the Hansen-Ross or the James kilns, she arranged to fire her work in the Connaught Library electric community kiln, a few short blocks from the basement studio in her home in Regina. It was at this kiln that Malach fired *For Ena*, and the Franciscan Friary mural, *Untitled,* in 1976 and the Sturdy-Stone lobby mural. [56] Malach did not possess her own kiln until after she had completed this large commission.

Figure 76: *Untitled*, 1976, Lorraine Malach, Chapel Old Franciscan Friary, Edmonton, Alberta

[55] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, 1975, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[56] Father Don MacDonald interviewed by the author, Edmonton, 13 Sept. 2010; Government Services, "Lorraine Malach," in *Sturdy-Stone Artwork: Sturdy-Stone Centre Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,* (Government of Saskatchewan, 1980), 8.

Figure 77: *For Ena*, Lorraine Malach, Connaught Public Library, 1976

Intention and Intensive Creation

I argue that during the seven months it took Malach to fabricate this work in her basement studio, as much as she shaped the clay, the clay shaped her, physically, emotionally and socially. The scale of this one-ton mural[57] was similar to the large work she had executed in 1976-77 for the Franciscan Friary in Edmonton and demanded physical endurance and emotional equilibrium. Malach had to pace herself. Her home studio was a convenient space financially, and for the most part physically. Malach worked from an initial sketch that the architects, SAB, and Government Services had approved.[58] The drawing was then made to scale and these linear forms were transferred onto the prepared clay slabs using a pouncing method similar to fresco painting, a technique Malach had learned as a student.[59] The translation from two to three

[57] Government Services, "Lorraine Malach," in *Sturdy-Stone Artwork: Sturdy-Stone Centre Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,* (Government Services, Government of Saskatchewan, 1980), 8.
[58] Deana Driver, "Lorraine Malach – A great Talent Plus Inspiration = Distinctive Murals," *Prairie Arts* 1 no. 5 (Fall 1983): 21.
[59] "Entry Hall Mural By Lorraine Malach Progress Report," File 3935-M2 Vol.1 Operational Exhibits and Displays - Case Files, Malach, Lorraine/Sculpture for Lobby, Royal Tyrrell Museum Archives.

dimension was particularly challenging, as the solid space the clay takes up cannot be replicated on paper. Blocks of clay were laid out on the two tables as the whole work was made at once. After overlapping and pounding these blocks with a mallet to a two-inch thickness, because she did not possess a slab roller, Malach quickly built up the main sculptural forms from thinner slabs, working quickly over three days to assure the clay maintained the required moisture. The high relief surfaces needed firm clay supports to prevent warping in the drying and firing stages, and these structures were carefully calculated in order to avoid cracking in the high temperature firing. This rapid process was followed by a much longer period she dedicated to meticulous modelling and carving in order to refine the details, sometimes altering a tile up to five times, at various stages in its drying.[60] Spending most of her waking hours in what she called "the salt mines" made her feel isolated from the world, socially and physically, like a "mole."[61] She explained: "The clay has a drying time and I am only able to work within it –ergo – I've been doing up to 12 hrs each day in the black hole of Calcutta called basement."[62] Because of the unwieldy size of the large panel, it had to be cut when the clay was in the leather hard stage into smaller units convenient for further working, to ensure even drying, to take into consideration the kiln size, and to allow appropriate mounting. When Ketler mounted the murals he remarked that some of her lower tiles were too small to hold the weight of those in the rows above, and therefore he had to adapt his mounting techniques to secure them so the process could proceed efficiently.[63] These cuts were calculated to follow as much as possible the sculptural forms, although the cuts are still visible especially on the background slab, where different sizes of quadrilaterals have been produced. It was after this sectioning that the sculpted clay, now firm enough to handle without distortion, was hollowed out. The edges were bevelled, the work reassembled and coloured slips added as needed. The pieces were then carefully moved around so they could dry evenly, reducing distortion, and only reassembled after the bisque to map out the glazing. Malach used a variety of glazes, beginning with her own formulated base glaze on

[60] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, early October, c 1978, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; "Entry Hall Mural By Lorraine Malach Progress Report," File 3935-M2 Vol.1 Operational Exhibits and Displays - Case Files, Malach, Lorraine/Sculpture for Lobby, Royal Tyrrell Museum Archives; Claire Watrall, "Sturdy-Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Lorraine Malach, 3, 2005-53 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Carlson, 1982, 4.
[61] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, 29 Nov. 1980, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection; Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, c1978, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[62] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, 12 Dec. 1976, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[63] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy-Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Installation, 1," 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

which she layered commercial glazes and oxides. In line with her philosophy of experimentation and personal commitment to recycling, Malach turned to European wine bottles for special effects, broken up and laid on the sculptured tiles in the kiln.[64] Malach would see the result of her decisions only when the mural was finally mounted.

Figure 78: Lorraine Malach working in her basement workshop
Regina, c 1980

Even though the mural was to be viewed vertically from a distance as well as close-up, it had to be worked on a flat horizontal surface, as anything more than a very slight incline would mean the clay would slip from its support. Evaluating her work from the visual perspective of her audience was impossible as the space constraints of her small studio meant that she would have been unable to have a distance view by perching on a high ladder. All her decisions regarding the proportions of forms and colours took into account the discrepancy between her viewing point and its placement on the wall. She lamented that often she could see her murals up close solely when they were lying flat in her studio, as once they were mounted they were often

[64] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy-Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Lorraine Malach, 4, 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Syl Kramer, 6 Sept. 2010.

quite geographically inaccessible.[65] This restriction meant she was unable to "live with a work" that could allow her to study a mural over a period of time and reflect on the efficacy of the different strategies she had employed. Most importantly, however, she had to be acutely aware of design decisions such as angles, depths of forms, and colours at each stage of making, as once the clay had been bisque fired there could be no significant alteration of the form and surface patterns, and after the glaze firing the colour decisions were irrevocable. An advantage in designing the lobby mural was that it was to be viewed at the audience's eye level from both a close and medium range, rather than the extreme distances involved in the exterior murals or the awkward height above the elevators.

In 1982 while working on the second Sturdy-Stone commission she observed: "Working with clay, there has to be total involvement from the beginning to end. I think that is why it is so exhausting. There isn't any point where you can be distracted or think of something else. It's a matter of total concentration." [66] Although Malach initially had studied frescoes, and executed a significant painted mural early in her career, she preferred clay, as its chemical transformation into ceramic that was then attached to a wall, meant it actually became a wall. In a 1983 analogy between a mural made with ceramic and one done with watercolour, she observed the latter would be like trying to create a symphony with only flutes. The high relief of the lobby mural ensured it took up a lot of visual and psychological space, requiring Malach to take this into consideration during the designing, making and glazing stages.[67] The intensity attached to this procedure is normally what is expected when working with complex one-of-a-kind ceramic relief sculptures, but by and large hidden from the general public if the steps are all effectively achieved.

Historical Precedents

An important step in the making of the mural was Malach's strategy for sectioning the mural into reasonable tile sizes. The irregular jig-saw like tiles of the lobby mural are markedly different from the regular lines and tile forms in the exterior murals. This strategy also sets the mural apart from the uniform rectangular or square patterns that are the result of more

[65] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, nd, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[66] Carlson, 1982, 4.
[67] Lorraine Malach interviewed by Ken Mitchell, Saskmedia, 1982, VTR-6037.1, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

commercial mural practices, both historical and contemporary.[68] Tile work has always resulted in a visual tension between the surface image and the shape of the tiles themselves. European tile work has historically adopted two strategies regarding this challenge. One approach takes advantage of the individual tile shape with a complete image for each tile, where multiples are assembled thematically into an installation. As such, groupings can be expanded and contracted relatively efficiently by the producer and consumer and are appropriate for repetitive work.[69] Another system privileges the surface image over the individual tile so the image is carried over several tiles, with part of the whole image on each tile.[70] The success of this relies upon the regularity of the tile shapes, assuming the viewer will focus on the complex image rather than on the grid created by the tile layout.[71]

Another approach to tile cutting was developed in the early Renaissance by the della Robbia family of Florence, Italy, for their majolica relief sculptures, and grew from three-dimensional renaissance clay sculpture. These polychrome works of the della Robbia family were important to Malach as part of the artistic and technical history of her medium, as she pointed out in a 1982 television interview.[72] The complexity of their three-dimensional surfaces demanded they be sliced into sections, especially evident in their tondos, and within the tondo frames sectioning lines are hidden by the complex floral and vegetal relief designs. To cut the interior of the smaller tondos, radii were made that originated from the boundary of the central figure or figures, thereby breaking the circle into regular parts that reflected the form and content of the relief. While the central figures were left whole, imparting a visual integrity, this also limited the size of the figures. In larger rectangular relief murals, the della Robbia strategy was to

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[68] These productions include the ceramic murals of the Arts and Crafts movement, as well as tiles for large scale projects such as the concave glazed tiles designed by Claude Vermette for the 1960s projects that include the Saint Laurent Station in the Montréal Metro, and École Secondaire Augustin-Norbert-Morin in Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

[69] This type of tiling is seen in Islamic tiles dating back to the ninth century, in British medieval floor tiles, in Italian and French Renaissance majolica tiles and in Dutch delftware tiles. In the context of the Arts and Crafts Movement this method was often chosen by William de Morgan in Britain for his two-dimensional tiles and by the Moravian tile works in Pennsylvania for their relief tiles. Tony Herbert and Kathryn Huggins, *The Decorative Tile in Architecture and Interiors*, (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), 9-41; See also Gordon Lang, ed., *1000 Tiles: Ten Centuries of Decorative Ceramics,* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004).

[70] This type of tile decoration was executed in Europe since the Renaissance especially in delftware and later stoneware and porcelain tiles, as well as into the Arts and Crafts period in both Britain and the United States. Herbert and Huggins, 1995; Lang, 2004.

[71] Québec artist, Maurice Savoie, used this approach in his relief murals for the Eaton stores in Montréal, Anjou and Laval, (1966, 1967, 1973 respectively), as well as those for the Montréal Radio-Canada building in 1970. Maurice Savoie archives, private collection.

[72] Lorraine Malach interviewed by Ken Mitchell, 1982.

section the relief so cuts would follow the forms and be hidden within the design as much as possible.[73] Malach had seen several della Robbia sculptures in Florence and used this approach of cutting background tiles radiating from the central figure in an earlier 1976 mural, *For Ena.* Later eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century works in terra cotta and Coadestone were based on moulding individual parts. While Malach was probably unaware of Coadestone, she would have been familiar with the architectural use of terra cotta in Philadelphia, New York and London. This terra cotta relief sculpture was also carefully sectioned to conceal the joints for aesthetic purposes.[74]

Figure 79: *The Adoration of the Magi*, Andrea della Robbia, 16th C.

[73] These approaches are found in two reliefs by the della Robbia family found in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The former approach is evident in the tondo, "Roundel depicting Julia (?) Augustus & Agrippa," Giovanni della Robbia (or workshop of), c 1520-1525, 369-1864 and the latter in "Altarpiece, The Assumption of the Virgin," Andrea Della Robbia (workshop of), c1486-1525, 6741:5-1860.
[74] Amanda M. Didden, "Standardization of Terra Cotta Anchorage: An Analysis of Shop Drawings From the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company and the O.W. Ketcham Terra Cotta Works," MSc., University of Pennsylvania, 2003, 10.

These antecedents of Malach's Sturdy-Stone murals were all created within a setting involving multiple people, such as the della Robbia workshops, or the industrial American and British terra cotta manufactories. In contrast, Malach's murals were produced within a studio setting by one person acting as both designer and maker. Because she did all the work herself, she had the freedom to make decisions about the sectioning as she constructed the mural. She did not have to accommodate the requirements imposed by an architect-designer nor did she have to consider efficiency constraints imposed by the need for multiples. On the other hand, because she worked alone, she could not rely on the critical input of others or the accumulated experience that occurs within a workshop or manufactory setting.[75] Cutting strategies in Malach's murals show a developmental movement in both directions as she explored this problem, from irregular sectioning that followed the designs in her earliest murals to rectangular divisions and then a return to cuts that echoed the forms.[76] The irregular shapes of the lobby mural tiles and the structural divisions that follow the sculptured forms communicate the highly individualized nature of the mural. In an interview, Malach made an analogy between the function of lead in stained glass and the cuts in her clay surfaces, explaining they had to have a "pleasing design," but in fact the function of the lines is quite different.[77] The lead in stained glass joins different pieces together, while the mural cuts separate what was once together.

The Sturdy-Stone brochure for the artworks positioned the high relief lobby mural within the della Robbia tradition, explaining the colour palette and glazing was "suggestive of 'Renaissance Majolica'."[78] It is now known that, while the della Robbia palette was derived from majolica, the family conducted a considerable number of experiments, modifying glaze ingredients and specific mixing and application procedures to adapt it for their sculpture.[79]

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[75] Other ceramicists working within a studio had also employed this individualistic sectioning technique including Jordi Bonet in his early relief murals, the eight tympana, *Hommage à Gaudì*, 1963, Place Des Arts, Montréal, Québec. When Bonet's volume of work for monumental ceramic relief murals increased and his number of studio workers grew, he adopted regular rectangular sectioning that did not necessitate his intervention into this aspect of the process. Jordi Bonet, *The End of Time,* 1966, McDonald Block, Foyer, Ontario Government, Toronto.
[76] The 1976 Franciscan mural, *Untitled*, indicates how this problem pre-occupied Malach. Here vertical and horizontal lines clearly divide large sections of the surface, which are sliced into smaller tiles that generally try to follow the compositional lines of the mural.
[77] Robertson, "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone."
[78] "Lorraine Malach," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980.
[79] The della Robbia palette of this tin-glazed earthenware relied mainly on whites, blues and yellows as well as a limited amount of green, brown, and red. W. David Kingery and Meredith Aronson, "The Glazes of Luca della Robbia" *Faenza* 5, (1990): 221-24, cited in W. David Kingery, "Painterly Maiolica of the Italian Renaissance," *Technology and Culture* 34, no. 1 (Jan.1993): 40.

Majolica produced by the della Robbia workshops was fired much lower than Malach's cone six stoneware clay and its applied glazes. Her translation of the della Robbia palette for earthenware sculpture into ochres, blues and whites for medium-fire stoneware glazes anchor the lobby work within the aesthetics of twentieth-century stoneware ceramics. The colour range available in earthenware firings was difficult to achieve in the higher temperature stoneware firings, and in the mid-1970s studio potters were exploring the range of stoneware glazes, slips and stains, looking for shade diversity and textural effects. Technical information regarding glaze recipes, firing schedules, and compatibility with clay was diffused through newly written books and magazines such as the widely read *Ceramics Monthly* with its regular column dedicated to glaze technology.[80] Firing the tiles in an electric kiln in an oxidation atmosphere might ensure the colours would be as pure as possible, but accompanying this was the loss of a dynamic variability in the glaze colours, something assured in reduction firing through variation of heat flow from the flame and the interplay of the oxidation and reduction atmospheres. The range of colours in the mural show Malach was influenced by the results particular to gas firings, understandable as this aesthetic is associated with the Leach/Asian stoneware vessel tradition that was important in Saskatchewan during this period, and remains so today. Examination of the mural's glazes indicate several strategies to assure variability: different slips and glazes are layered to create a variety of tones; the application technique and thickness of the layers are varied to assure mottled effects; and brushstroke effects and melted glass have enlivened small areas. The dark hue of the stoneware clay helped to create a variegated surface as it shaded the tones according to glaze thickness, and the small areas of flat colours forming the complex detailed patterns achieved their own visual power through a textural contrast. A great deal of experience was required to guarantee the results of this complex interplay would not be overly splotchy, too busy or flat, and the sculptural individuality of each tile meant there was only one chance to succeed. I suggest that the clays, glazes, and firing procedure used in this mural and the subsequent eighth-floor one, are agents in the establishment of the sociability of the mural

80 Between January 1969 and June 1979, Richard Behrens, a chemist and potter, contributed seventy-two articles on glazes to *Ceramics Monthly.* He also published two books on glaze making: *Ceramic Glazemaking: Experimental Formulation and Glaze Recipes*, (Columbus Ohio: Professional Publications, 1976); and *Glaze Projects, A Formulary of Leadless Glazes,* (Columbus Ohio: Professional Publications, 1972).

and act to affect the viewer's response. They also are mediators in the establishment of Canadian ceramic professionalism.

The Mural in Action

The robust forms, densely constructed surfaces, intricate patterning, and reflective ceramic glazes project this mural into the lobby space making it a focal point of this public area. A discussion of these formal aspects of the mural will shed some light on how *Untitled*, 1977 functions. This approach challenges the anti-formalism that arose because of justifiable ideological concerns about formalism's problematic non-political engagement with the art object.[81] However, Michael Baxandall's description of the development of limewood sculptures in Renaissance Germany that takes into account material, technique, form, and colour has demonstrated a formalist approach still has something to offer.[82] In the case of the lobby mural the fusion of formalism with a sociological reading recognizes the object itself and its sociability.

The lobby mural's sculptural qualities project it into the visitor's physical space and the detailed patterns, visible from a variety of angles entice her to change her viewing angle to see more of the work. The juxtaposition of sharp and rounded edges results in an array of cast shadows that inflect the colours of the glazed surfaces, while the interaction of reflected light with the high gloss of the glazes breaks up the solidity of the masses. The squareness of the mural is enlivened through the strong diagonal movements, such as the hybrid tubular forms powerfully arcing across its surface, but firm verticals in the upper half of this unsymmetrical composition anchor the directional flow. Decorative patterning of stripes and dots and rhythmic placements of repeated irregular shapes all contribute to the effect of the overlay, intersection, and interplay of layers of representational systems. Patterns have been intertwined with shapes, breaking up definable forms and overlaying images, increasing the possibilities of multiple visual references that embrace fossils, botany, and music. These broken surfaces invite the eye to explore the smaller spaces to find other hidden objects, and in an almost kaleidoscope fashion, pull the viewer's gaze from one form to the other until she feels as if she is dancing across the surface.

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[81] Potts, 2000, 210.
[82] Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980).

The plays of light, line, colour, textures and form result in an initial sensual seduction, but if time is taken to explore the imagery, the viewer is invited into an intellectual engagement. I argue that Malach inscribed such a program of action. Both Malach's Sturdy-Stone murals are labelled "Untitled," as she believed "labels solidify an image in the viewer's mind and block the communication between the artist and the viewer."[83] Despite Malach's aversion to imposed imagery, associations for the mural are suggested in her artist statement for the *Sturdy-Stone Artwork* brochure: "The work *could* represent growing forms [my italics]. Many of the shapes form and expand into other designs and shape reminiscent of flowers and leaves, giant petals, stems, buds, and the occasional bloom."[84] The forms of Malach's Sturdy-Stone mural do suggest a variety of growing things through coloured and textured botanical pattern and sculptural references to both flowering plants and fungi. However, for someone with musical knowledge, these forms and patterns reconfigure into a variety of string, wind, and brass instruments. While this might suggest a symphony or at least a chamber orchestra, there are segments of musical instruments related to what is often associated with vernacular music. Included are portions of the flute, clarinet, oboe, organ, piano, violin, guitar, French horn, saxophone, as well as the harmonica and accordion. Again if the viewer's knowledge extends into geology or paleontology, it seems these figures metamorphose into or are metamorphosed from extinct prehistoric fauna such as ammonites, crinoids, and nautiloids. In terms of the overall theme of the Sturdy-Stone mural project, the mural embeds the people and their artistic expressions within Saskatchewan's landscape. *Untitled* 1977 represents Saskatchewan as a wondrous place overflowing with sensual delights found in the natural and cultural worlds, brought together through this work.

This close relationship between music and the natural world was a recurring theme in Malach's work both before the Sturdy-Stone mural and for many years afterwards.[85] Malach intertwined patterns and forms alluding to music, botany, and paleontology in the murals, *Spring and Summer* and *Fall and Winter*, St. Michael's Retreat House, c1970 and the exterior mural at

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[83] Peggy Forde, "Sturdy-Stone Murals: Abstract to Concrete," *The Craft Factor* 8, no.3 (Summer 1983): 3.
[84] "Lorraine Malach," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980, 8. My italics.
[85] Malach was an accomplished musician who played the piano daily and who counted among her friends many prominent regional and national musicians. Botanical studies were not just theoretical but also practical as she grew much of her own food in a small urban garden and tended a large selection of flowers from which she harvested seed. Brother Tessier, Aug. 2010; Syl Kramer in conversation with the author, Calgary, 8 Sept. 2010; Father MacDonald, 13 Sept. 2010.

the Catholic Information Centre Regina, 1970. In *For Ena,* the botanical and musical references are disentangled so they could each be accessed more easily, an essential attribute as it is installed in the children's section of the public library. Here, a clear connection is made between music and flowers with floral notes emanating from the pan flute. In the Franciscan Friary mural executed the same year, flowers and music were intermingled in angelic forms. Possible allusions to Saskatchewan's paleontological and geological history tie the lobby mural to the Tyndall stone facing of the Sturdy-Stone building, which itself is teeming with this fossil record. Restricting the layered meaning of this mural with a directive or prescriptive title would threaten the ongoing discovery of sensual delight, and privilege the textual encounter over one with the object. This mingling of texture and form serves to interconnect the fecundity of the land with delight of music.

Figure 80: Lorraine Malach, c1969-70, St. Michael's Retreat Centre, Lumsden Saskatchewan
Spring and Summer *Fall and Winter*

These increasingly intermingled references disrupt a positivist approach to engagement with the world. The coupling of such an engagement with an intellectual curiosity effectively ruptures the mind/body and culture/nature binaries that have dominated Western epistemology. This philosophical communication arose from Malach's commitment to her Catholic faith and

her almost mystic spirituality that attached her to the Franciscan movement.[86] Her emphasis on an emotional, joyful response of her audience to her murals drew heavily on a romantic encounter with the world that she overlay with reflective and insightful science studies. Malach embedded this philosophical vision in the mural through her manipulation of its formal and associative elements so these became agents to transmit her particular worldview.

Part of this discovery of the richness of the world involves the viewer's apprehending the myriad patterns found throughout all the surfaces of the lobby mural. Here, pattern play creates forms within a cubist sense of space so form and pattern are mutually dependent. This successful interdependence arose from years of shifting the arrangements of these elements within compositions, evident in the decorated surfaces forming the cubist compositions in Malach's linocuts, and painted wooden panels of the 1960's.[87] Further explorations are found on the restless repeated vegetal motifs and juxtapositions of scale of her 1966 murals, *Spring and Summer* and *Fall and Winter.* The sculpted forms covering the entire surfaces of these murals are broken up and agitated with competing patterned sections. The Sturdy-Stone lobby mural composition brought together elements from her previous experiences in murals, painting and drawing. Here, parts of the sculptured and patterned designs move to the border suggesting energetic forces flowing into and out of the main composition, rhythmically building and falling away. The flat undecorated tiles concentrated at the edges work to both push the force of the composition into the centre and simultaneously allow it to ebb. Through the manipulation of these compositional elements, Malach has delegated the mural to publicly convey her vision of the vibrant sensual interconnections of which the world is made.

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[86] Malach was seen as a mystic by some of the Western Franciscan Brothers with whom she had close friendships. Brother Tessier 31 Aug. 2010. During this time in her life she called herself a Franciscan although she did not adhere to any of their official organizations, and executed two monumental murals *Untitled*, 1977 and *The Exultation of Saint Francis*, 1981 dealing with the life of St. Francis and the founding of the order for the Franciscan Friary in Edmonton and Holy Family Notre Dame parish church in Port Alberni, B.C. She lived this commitment in her daily life, as an environmentally and ecologically conscious person, recycling, growing her food, and living very simply. Carlson, 1982, 4; Lorraine Malach interviewed by Ken Mitchell, 1982; Brother Tessier, 31 Aug, 2010.

[87] Malach made woodcut and linocut prints that she used for her annual Christmas cards she sent to her friends over the years. Her linocut print, *Christ in Cosmos*, was used on the cover of Jake Kutarna, *The Way: A Guide for Inquirers into the Catholic Faith.* Malach wrote she admired the work of earlier painters who exploited decorative patterning such as the Canadian-American Prendergast brothers, Maurice and Charles, who both combined representation and patterning in their paintings of the first half of the twentieth-century. Paintings by the Prendergast brothers are in the Barnes Foundation collection. Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, nd, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

The application of coloured decorative detail in Malach's lobby mural is unique in the Sturdy-Stone murals. While the impressed random patterns of the exterior Hardy-Woolsey mural create a lively background texture, and the repetitive ridged surfaces and repeating tile shapes distinguish the exterior Sures mural, coloured decorative detail is most insistent in the Malach lobby mural. This patterning is associated with the sensual aspect of the mural that makes its presence felt within the lobby, and is tied to Malach's aim to impart to the mural's audience some form of well-being or joy, eliciting from its audience a response such as, "Wow, life is pretty great, isn't it?"[88]

Design historian David Brett argues "individual pleasure and social function are suffused with one another in and through visual delight as shown in decoration."[89] Brett also importantly suggests we consider the links between decoration, the haptic system, and vision. Like Potts in his discussion of sculpture, Brett emphasizes the crossover between the sensations generated by touch and sight, which can both disrupt or emphasize our expectations of the experience of materials and increase the delight in our encounter with surface and form. For Brett, as well as Potts, the body is enhanced through these encounters as "the more we approach the consideration of pleasure the closer we find ourselves to our human bodies."[90] American art historian James Trilling also makes this important link between positive emotions, multi-sensory stimulation, and ornament. Referring to ornament as "visual texture," he describes it as "the shapes and patterns worked into an object or building for the *pleasure* of outline, color, or fantasy." He assures us that to "grasp a culture's ornament…is to grasp its heritage, its uniqueness, its *joy*."[91] However, unlike Trilling who claims that "[o]rnament is decoration in which the visual pleasure of form significantly outweighs the communicative value of content,"[92] I argue that emotional and intellectual content cannot be disassociated in interactions involving the maker, the mural and the viewer.

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[88] Lorraine Malach quoted in Carlson, 1982, 6.
[89] David Brett, *Rethinking Decoration: Pleasure and Ideology in the Visual Arts,* (New York: Cambridge University press, 2005), 2.
[90] Ibid, 73.
[91] James Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective,* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 5, xiii, 3. My italics.
[92] Ibid, 23.

A Feminist Intervention

Repeated remarks about the emotional content in Malach's mural, and Malach's own observations about this aspect of her work, set her murals apart from the other Sturdy-Stone murals where this was never mentioned as an important public attribute. Malach often did link this emotional response with spirituality, which could partly be ascribed to the religious context of many of her murals where emotional evocation was an expected and accepted component. However, I suggest this recurring reference, coupled with equally frequent remarks about the mural's haptic qualities and its richly decorated surfaces, signal this work as a feminist intervention into public sculpture. In traditional hierarchical binaries that have dominated western gender discourse the feminine has been constructed as emotional, irrational, natural, subjective and chaotic as opposed to the rational, cultural, universal and ordered masculine. In 1982, feminist scholar Griselda Pollock noted that "[r]ationality and feeling have been fixed as opposing images and attributes of masculinity and femininity," exhorting feminists to "appropriate both, as theory and as feeling in order to make the personal political."[93] In an attempt to correct emotion's negative associations within patriarchal systems, anthropologist Catherine Lutz argues its positive attribute, opposition to alienation, is "the interpersonal connection or relationship in an unemotional estrangement." [94] Lutz's manoeuvre, however, does not remove emotion's gendered associations despite flipping the binary; indeed, whether read in a positive or negative light, as art historian Susan Best observes, the "gendering of feeling and emotion" remains.[95] Best has pointed out that, unsurprisingly, the emotional content of modern art has largely been ignored by recent art history, where any analysis or even recognition of it has been complicated by "the deliberate rejection of feeling by key artists and art movements" of the 1960s and 1970s.[96] Emotional content in art was certainly suspect as well as an effective feminist strategy. Pollock cautioned, "we also want to avoid being trapped in the man-made category of woman as repository of feeling, subject to the tyranny of emotions." She further asserted, "feelings…are material, historical, and sites of social struggle." Specifically regarding the feeling

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[93] Griselda Pollock, "'Theory and Pleasure,' 1982 Dossier: 'Sense and Sensibility," in *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985,* ed. Rozsika Parker and Grisleda Pollock, (London: Pandora, 1987), 245.
[94] Catherine A. Lutz, "Engendered Emotion: Gender, Power and Rhetoric of Emotional Control in American Discourse," in *The Emotions: social, cultural, and biological dimensions,* ed. Rom Harré and Gerrod Parrott, (London; Thousand Oaks California: Sage Publications, 1996), 151. This statement interestingly ignores the fact that estrangement is actually emotional.
[95] Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde.* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 5.
[96] Ibid 1.

of pleasure, Pollock noted it had become a "political issue" and women artists were faced with the challenge of "construct[ing] new emancipatory pleasures" that moved beyond those dominated by the scopic.[97] I suggest that by recognizing the Malach lobby mural as emotionally evocative, relying for its message on a tactile well as scopic encounter, and created during second wave feminism, it can be read as a feminist statement opposing many of the key masculine dominated contemporary art movements. It challenged the absence of positive emotional content in the "masculine" modernist Sturdy-Stone Centre architecture it decorated.

Figure 81: String Players from the Saskatoon Symphony in front of Lorraine Malach's lobby mural, October 1983.

In their introduction to *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts,* art historians Janice Helland and Bridget Elliott trace how decoration, ornament and detail were brought together in a particularly feminized and pejorative discursive category in the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries.[98] However, this feminization of ornament and decoration was also harnessed in certain cases to reclaim public architectural spaces for women, as Elizabeth Cummings illustrates in her

[97] Pollock, "'Theory and Pleasure,' 1982 Dossier: 'Sense and Sensibility," 245-46.
[98] Bridget Elliott and Janice Helland, "Introduction," in *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts 1880-1935: The gender of ornament,* ed. Bridget Elliott and Janice Helland, (Aldershot England and Burlington Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2002), 2-8.

discussion of hospital and chapel applied art projects executed by British artists Phoebe Anna Traquair and Mary Seton Watts, respectively.[99] Despite their temporal, national and architectural differences, strong affinities among these two projects and Malach's Sturdy-Stone lobby mural emerge when we consider their common concern to convey spiritual expression through the formal elements of line, space and colour, and the "tactile richness of the handmade."[100] Cummings argues Traquair and Watts managed to divert "the relative 'masculinity' of architecture through a union of the visual, the tactile and the conceptual within their buildings and individual objects."[101] Malach's lobby mural also performs that function.

The importance of the tactile is inherent in theoretical discussions of decoration and emotion in art; it also features in publicity surrounding the Sturdy-Stone Centre lobby mural and, in fact, all Malach's murals of the period. Malach was vocal about the importance of this sensory experience for her and its audience. She asserted in an unpublished article on the Sturdy-Stone mural program submitted to *Ceramics Monthly* "in clay there is a chance to explore the tangible which is for me, more honest and satisfying."[102] The notion that the senses are inflected by gender values has become widespread in cultural studies, and has been explored in terms of twentieth-century feminism, especially in relation to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray's reading of Merleau-Ponty.[103] Sensory scholars Constance Classen and David Howes both have turned to Irigaray's early work to develop their arguments that opposition between the sexes "is partly constituted by opposition between the senses [of sight and touch] with the dominance of vision as the privileged male sense, and touch as principally associated with women."[104] Classen elaborates upon this explaining, "[w]omen, … are more likely to emphasize the "interactive" and "responsive" sense of touch."[105] The

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[99] Elizabeth Cumming, "Patterns of life: the art and design of Phoebe Anna Traquair and Mary Seton Watts," in Elliott and Helland, 2002, 16.
[100] Ibid, 15.
[101] Ibid, 26.
[102] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy-Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Lorraine Malach, 1," 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005 53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[103] See especially Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible,* (Evanston Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1968) and Luce Irigray, "This Sex Which is Not One," in *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke, (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 23-33. For a compilation of feminist examinations of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology see Dorothea Olkowski and Gail Weiss, eds, *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).
[104] David Howes, "A Sensorial Anthropology," in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses,* ed. David Howes, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 189.
[105] Constance Classen, The Color of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination, (London: Routledge, 1998), 63.

essentialist association between women and touch and its power of resistance to the patriarchy was given much strength in Irigaray's essay, "This Sex Which is Not One." Irigaray explained: "[w]oman takes pleasure more from touching than from looking, and her entry into a dominant scopic economy signifies, again, her consignment to passivity."[106] She pointed out: "investment in sight is not privileged in women as in men. More than any of the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters . . . In our culture, the predominance of the gaze over smell, taste, touch, and hearing has led to an impoverishment of corporeal relations."[107] Howes even suggests that in order for women to achieve equality in society, the gendered hierarchy of sight and touch would need to be reversed.[108] Within sensory studies, whether constructed as the hierarchy of the senses or as a multiplicity of the senses, touch has routinely been "found at one end," and associated with women.[109] From its delegation by Aristotle as an animalistic sense, through Renaissance and early Modern Europe's linking it with witchcraft, to Freud's association of its refinement to "regression, neuroses and even perversion" touch has certainly been constructed as the antithesis of the nobility of sight.[110] To destabilize the patriarchy, second wave feminists challenged one of its building blocks, the scopic, though a variety of strategies, one of them emphasizing the importance of touch in their art practices and the reinsertion of the performing body. This disruption of the male gaze created a space from which women artists, like Malach could speak. As Classen has pointed out an important query for touch discourse in western culture should be "how has it been creatively employed by women?"[111]

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[106] L. Irigaray, 1985, 26.
[107] L. Irigaray, "Interview avec Luce Irigaray", in *Les Femmes, la pornographie et l'érotisme*, ed. M.-F. Hans and G. Lapouge, (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1978), 50, quoted in Classen, 1998, note 2, 173-4. As Classen has more recently pointed out alternative readings of Irigaray open up the possibility that women find tactile engagement more fulfilling than visual mastery associated with men." See Constance Classen, "Women's Touch," in *The Book of Touch,* ed. Constance Classen, (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005), 203. Australian academic Cathryn Vesseleu's inquiry into vision and light in the writings of Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty points out vision itself can be associated with the touch of light as Irigaray suggests. She opens up another way for feminists to move beyond the dichotomy between sight and touch that has framed some second-wave feminist theory. Cathryn Vasseleu, *Textures of light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau Ponty,* London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
[108] Howes, "A Sensorial Anthropology," 189. Such a simplistic solution of binary reversals, probably both inappropriate and ineffective, illustrates this lacuna of serious scholarship in early sensory studies. For a more recent and nuanced engagement with touch in terms of sensory studies see Classen, 2005.
[109] Naomi Segal, *Consensuality: Didier Anzieu, gender and the sense of touch,* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 3.
[110] Constance Classen, "The Witch's Senses: Sensory and Transgressive Femininities from the Renaissance to Modernity," in *The Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, ed. David Howes, (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005), 70-84; Susan Stewart, "Remembering the Senses," in Howes, 2005, 61; Anthony Synnott, "Puzzling over the Senses: From Plato to Marx," in Howes, 1991, 61-76.
[111] Classen, 2005, 203.

By combining emotion, touch, the decorative arts, and botany, all of which have been associated pejoratively with women and their cultural production, I suggest Malach's murals claim this government space for women.[112] Such a discussion of Malach's lobby mural looks to Jane Rendell's approach to the integration of art and architecture as "critical spatial practice [that] transgresses the limits of art and architecture and engages with both the social and aesthetic, the public and the private."[113] As Rendell reminds us it is important to consider "the specifics of particular sites and places in relational terms as parts of larger networks, systems and processes, physically and ideologically."[114] For an artist working in Saskatchewan gender was an issue, and for those who were commissioning the work it was also a key consideration. James Ellemers explained he had specifically invited feminist ceramicist Ann James to submit a proposal, but found the nature of her suggestion too provocative and transgressive as it involved the "smearing" of clay, unsuitable for a public art project in an iconic building.[115] However, Malach's mural, executed with a definable skill, was an acceptable feminist intervention for general and long-term public consumption.

Malach did participate in a 1976 exhibition featuring the work of eleven women painters from Saskatchewan and Alberta. The two-page catalogue essay reveals the anxiety felt at the time around specifically highlighting the work of women artists. It pointed out being a prairie woman artist "meant an additional stigma to contend with," aside from those facing any prairie artist such as a lack of galleries and teaching positions: This "stigma" attached to sexual difference resulted in a number of limiting conditions. "There are few women in university art department faculties and they have had little effect as art teachers in advanced studies. Few public galleries have pursued a conscious policy of making sure women artists are given the same opportunity to exhibit as men." Despite this clear concern, the curator pointedly asserted: "Although the artists in this exhibition are women, it is not a feminist exhibition and the attributes which have been formulated to describe feminine art… [essentialist imagery] are not applicable."[116] Above all she called for the work to be valued "for what it is, minus all the

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[112] Brett, 2005, 16; Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology,* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 50-58.
[113] Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between,* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 6.
[114] Ibid, 20.
[115] Ellemers, 31 April 2008.
[116] Carol A. Phillips, "Changes: 11 Artists Working on the Prairies," in *Changes: 11 Artists Working on the Prairies* in Mackenzie Art Gallery, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1976), 2. New York feminist art critic, Lucy Lippard, was convinced in 1973 that there did exist specific "feminine art [because…] female experience, social and

labels." In this sense the quality of the work was stressed as an important criteria that could be applied to any exhibition: "the works inspired their own showing. They are each solid statements…" This emphasis on the works transfers agency to the specifically contextualized non-essentialist art, rather than the politicized women artists, thus removing the gender specificity that initially fuelled the exhibition program. The goal of showing exclusively women's art was to change the male-dominated art world so all art could be understood as "human art." Importance was placed on how well the women were playing and succeeding in the art game whose rules were constructed within patriarchy: "The restriction to painting and sculpture was purposely established to emphasize the reality, that art in the 'grand' tradition is being produced by women. The pieces are reflective of a variety of contemporary movements and styles."[117] The women chosen were therefore working within the mainstream vocabularies of acceptable and nameable modern and contemporary art styles, and any so-called feminist content that dealt specifically with women's lives and/or experiences was not addressed. An example of the feminist content of the work in the exhibition includes two of Malach's four paintings, provocatively titled *Dead Bride (Light),* 1974 and *Dead Bride (Dark),* 1974. Despite their clear labels, they were to be valued, according to the catalogue admonition, as objects with no labels. Political feminism was even further denounced in the closing paragraph of the essay:

> Although a source of some inspiration initially, the phenomenon of International Women's year became more and more inconsequential as this exhibition materialized. Conversations with the artists and consideration of the works affirmed the importance of documenting what was being done for its inherent quality alone and any commemorative value in this exhibition with respect to International Women's year is of secondary importance.[118]

The close examination of this essay reveals the anxiety felt in the mid-1970s about prairie feminism and confusion about the effectiveness of strategies of inclusion and confrontation.

This kind of ambivalence about focussing only on women artists reflected what was happening elsewhere in Canada as well as in Britain and the United States.[119] In 1975 Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj curated the exhibition *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in*

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biological is different from that of the male." She acknowledges that although there must be some differences it is "impossible to pin it down." Lucy Lippard, "Why Separate Women's Art?" *Art and Artists* 8, (Oct. 1983): 9.

[117] Phillips, 1976, 2-3.

[118] Ibid, 3.

[119] For a survey of writing on women artists see Lamia Doumato, "The Literature of Women in Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 3, no.1 "Women in Art" (April 1980): 74-77.

Canada, held at the Agnes Etherington Arts Centre at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. In his foreward, the gallery director avowed his dislike in making "the distinction that an artist is male or female."[120] According to the curators, the exhibition's purpose was to choose paintings based on their "aesthetic value," a criteria left unexamined, but which led to their observations about themes, "psychological and narrative," chosen by women painters that distinguished them from themes favoured by men such as "action subjects or the empty landscape tradition."[121] Their concluding paragraph opined that even in the mid-1970s, the women artist was still "transparent" in that she was not seen.[122] This search for an essential women's subject matter or vocabulary coupled with an ambivalence of some museum directors to understand the need to highlight women's art, marginalized because of social, economic, and political conditions, was widespread. A year earlier, 1974, American feminist curator Lucy Lippard had discovered that mounting women-only exhibitions was also difficult, if not impossible. After much resistance Lippard finally did succeed in putting on "Ca. 7,500," a London show that included the work of twenty-six European and American women artists. As Pollock and Roszika Parker note, there was such a lack of understanding and even hostility to this all-women exhibition, despite the centuries of all-men exhibitions, that the organizers and the artists were called on to justify the show's gender parameters and feminist content.[123] What was considered a feminist statement in art was varied and contestable, and engendered much debate in Regina as well as in London. Was it enough to work within accepted art vocabularies and be included in public spaces traditionally inaccessible to women, or were more confrontational strategies necessary that questioned the very parameters of the art world?[124]

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[120] Michael Bell, "Foreword," in Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj, *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada*, (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Arts Centre, Queen's University, 1975).
[121] Farr and Luckyj, 1.
[122] Ibid, 6.
[123] Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, "Fifteen years of feminist action: from practical strategies to strategic practices," *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985,* in ed. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, (London: Pandora, 1987), 12. See also Bridget Elliott, "Housing the work: women artists, modernism and the *maison d'artiste*: Eileen Gray, Romaine Brooks, and Gluck," in Elliott and Helland, 2002, 178. Regarding a 1973 exhibition of architect Eileen Gray's work in Sheila de Bretteville's Women's Building in Los Angeles, Elliott notes Gray "did not want to see gender play any role in the production and consumption of cultural artefacts."
[124] Lamia Doumato points out feminist art historian in her seminal essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" Linda Nochlin suggested three themes to address the issue of women artists: the historical approach that includes competent women artists heretofore ignored, an inquiry into imagery particular to females, and the association of female artists to critique institutional strategies. Doumato, 1980, 74. See as well Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ARTnews* (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71.

Malach worked within one of the twentieth-century's accepted and identifiable art vocabularies, which made her work suitable in the eyes of the general public. Her ceramic works of this period do not indicate any interest in the funk vocabulary or protest imagery used by either James or Hone in their feminist works that overtly deconstructed gendered imagery and ceramic history, nor do they critique explorations of the gendered body typical of Margaret Keelan. Despite this refusal, Malach was very aware of gender politics, promoting women's equality in educational and religious institutions and resisting traditional gender roles. She conformed to an established and successful art style, and relied on her training, social network, and reputation for professionalism to have her ceramics included in exhibitions and to apply for commissions.

In her analysis of the presence of women in the Regina clay scene in the late 1960s and 1970s, art historian Julia Krueger points out gender tensions did exist. Two of the ceramicists who worked and taught in the Hone-James studio, Ruth Welsh and Pat (Bjornason) Courtnage had moved from the university because of "they did not like the environment they found there."[125] The careers of two of the most prominent women ceramic sculptors, Levine and Keelan, only really took off when they permanently moved to the United States.[126] While Levine, Hone, James, and later Keelan did participate in several of the shows that grouped together the avant-garde Regina ceramicists, exhibition and institutional histories indicate that both the sculptural/handbuilt and wheel-thrown ceramic establishments in Regina and Saskatoon were dominated at the élite levels by male ceramicists. In terms of public recognition for the accomplishments of women ceramicists in Saskatchewan, Malach's Sturdy-Stone murals were important.

The Mural Mounted

The Sturdy-Stone lobby mural was mounted in early 1979. Malach had been careful to make her tiles so that they would conform to Ketler's mounting specification, but their various thickness meant he had to custom cut and bend each strip of galvanized tin to accommodate their great variation. Malach usually mounted her murals by first laying them out on the floor, and

[125] Krueger, 2005, 53.
[126] Levine and Keelan graduated from the University of Regina and went on to receive graduate degrees from American universities. They returned to Regina, only to leave again permanently, Levine in 1973 and Keelan in the late 1970s. "Margaret Keelan, in Long, 2005, 120; "Marilyn Levine," in Long, 2005, 121.

Ketler worked from the bottom up, making sure each row sufficiently adhered to the wall before adding the next. Because of the drying time of the adhesive required before many rows could be built up and the need for custom strips, the mounting process took many days. Ketler was also responsible for matching the grout colour as much as possible to the glazes of the mural.[127]

The 1977 Sturdy-Stone mural has been a focus for the lobby, and activities have taken place in front of it. In October 1983, a concert given by string players of the Saskatoon Symphony with the mural as a backdrop was especially appropriate because of the musical instruments included in its design elements. In 2009 the SCC arranged a thirty-year celebration of the opening of the Sturdy-Stone Centre and its murals that was held in lobby in front of Malach's mural.[128] Malach's contribution to ceramics in Saskatchewan did not go unnoticed by Saskatchewan's professional arts and crafts organizations. The completion of the lobby mural and its installation resulted in her name being proposed by the SCC as their 1981 nominee for the Saidye Bronfman Prize awarded annually to a Canadian craftsperson for excellence in the crafts.[129] Although she did not win this prestigious award, in 1980 she did receive the first SAB $10,000 senior award grant.[130] The period between 1976 and 1983 during which Malach produced nine large-scale murals, the largest three hundred square feet, was the most intense period of her career.[131]

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[127] Jake Ketler interview by the author, Saskatoon, 26 May 2011.

[128] "String Players From the Saskatoon Symphony," Saskatoon Public Library, Popular Searches of the Local History Room Collections database, Sturdy-Stone, PH-SM-215-3, accessed 11 May 2013, http://spldatabase.saskatoonlibrary.ca/icswpd/exec/icswppro.dll?AC=QBE_QUERY&TN=LHR_RAD&NP=4&QB0=AND&QF0=CLASSIFICATION&QI0=STURDY+STONE+CENTRE&QB1=OR&QF1=SUBJECT&QI1=STURDY+STONE+CENTRE&MR=20&RF=www_Canned%20Searches&QB2=AND&QF2=THUMBNAIL_IMAGE&QI2=*.

[129] Letter from Saskatchewan Craft Council to Lorraine Malach, May 12 1981, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[130] Lorraine Malach CV, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection. 'Saskatchewan Arts' printed notification of the establishment of an annual artist's grant of $10,000 in addition to the materials grants previously available to assist individual artists.

[131] In 1976, as well as the Franciscan Friary mural and *For Ena,* she also completed a 5 ft. x 10 ft. mural *Growing Things,* for a private commission in Toronto, now lost (stolen). In 1978, Malach produced a 5 ft. x 3 ft. exterior mural for Mount Saint Francis Retreat House, Cochrane Alberta, and the mural, *Stephan's Quintet,* 9 ft. x 8 ft. for Sacred Heart parish church, Regina (moved in 2007 to St. Vincent de Paul parish church Weyburn Saskatchewan). In 1981 after working for a year and a half, she completed a commission for a large 10 ft. x 30 ft. mural, *Exultation of Saint Francis into Heaven*, for Holy Family Notre Dame Parish church in Port Alberni, British Columbia. In 1983 she created *The Tree of Life* as a fiftieth birthday gift for her friend, Dolores Kramer.

Light-hearted But Serious: Untitled, 1983, Eighth Floor Elevators

Above the Elevators

In the summer of 1980 Malach was among the one hundred Saskatchewan artists who were sent the call for submissions for the Sturdy-Stone Centre seventh, eighth, and ninth floor artworks and the T.C. Douglas Building in Regina lobby artworks. At the time Malach wrote in reply that, because of prior commitments to a monumental unfinished Port Alberni mural due to be installed in Spring 1981, she could not submit a proposal within the time limit, but was quite excited about the possibilities of doing a mural for either location. She was hopeful if there were "any leftovers" she might be kept in mind for work in 1981-82.[132] In fact, a list of first round submissions indicates that she did manage a mural proposal based on a minstrel theme for the T.C. Douglas Building with a suggested maximum price tag of $20,000.[133] As there were only two proposals accepted for the Sturdy-Stone Centre, Cicansky and Woolsey, the government did eventually turn to Malach to provide the third mural to complete the decorative program.[134] Her January 1982 progress report, necessary for the first payment instalment, reported the completion of the full-scale drawings of the minstrel mural explaining that while awaiting clay she was working on the colour combinations.[135] The mural was only finally mounted in March the following year, a year and a half after those by Cicansky and Woolsey.

Malach's two-part figurative ceramic mural, *Untitled* 1983*,* composed of three tons of clay cut into 1000 pieces, is attached to the walls above the five elevators on the eighth floor of the Sturdy-Stone building.[136] The two sections, 5ft. x 20 ft. (1.5 m. x 6 m.) and 5 ft. x 30 ft (1.5 m. x 9 m.) that include forty-two nearly life-size figures, face each other across the hall.[137] Above the bank of two elevators is the shorter section with fourteen figures, while the longer one with twenty-eight figures stretches across the grouping of three elevators. Currently the ceiling

[132] "Lorraine Malach letter to Pat Brown, 18 July 1980," R 1053, File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[133] "Sturdy-Stone Centre" in document "This is a Competition for Works of Art For 1. Sturdy-Stone Centre 2. T.C. Douglas Building" R 1053 File 90, SPCM President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[134] Letter from P.E. Brown to D.E. Foley, 31 Oct. 1980, R 1053, File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[135]"Lorraine Malach letter to Saskatchewan Government Services, 18 January 1982," R 1053, 125.6 File 190.d, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[136] Driver, 1983, 20; Robertson, "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone."
[137] Measurements are calculated combining information from two sources. Diane Driver quotes measurements as 1.5 m. x 6 m. and 1.5 m x 9 m. Driver, 1983, 20; Malach's CV by Syl Kramer lists the murals as two sections each 5 x 25 ft. Lorraine Malach CV, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

is painted beige, but in 2008 the light cobalt blue walls picked up the same shade in the mural's glaze. Malach's signature and 1982, the year the clay was formed, is scratched into the surface of each mural; however, the brass identification plaque describes it "Untitled," 1983. Once again, as in the lobby mural, the conflicting dates reflect different concepts of completion assigned to the project by the artist who finished working the clay in 1982 and the government that installed it in 1983. These murals were mounted shortly after the 1982 Conservative defeat of Blakeney's NDP government and consequently became known among the secretaries on the eighth floor as "Change of Government."[138] For those who encountered the mural daily its meaning was inflected by current political events. While *Untitled* was commissioned by an NDP government for a building that cemented (literally) NDP values and accomplishments, it marked the beginning of another political era.

Maybe "Untitled," But What is It?

A formal discussion of these murals, with an awareness of viewing points and movement by my own body gives some insights into how these murals interact with their public. Across the surfaces of the murals the abstracted, elongated relief figures cavort, leap, twist, and dance. These figures are distorted so that the bodies are shorter with thinner torsos and thicker limbs than life-size, but with larger than life-size hands and heads, body proportions derived from Malach's encounters with Asian sculpture. They emerge from the murals' slab bases, almost completely filling the wall above the bank of three elevators and stretch beyond the doors of the two-elevator section on the facing wall. The lower relief surfaces on these murals, in comparison to her lobby mural, or even *The Old Working Class,* reflect Malach's concern for public discomfort regarding walking under a heavy, high relief mural.[139] Their overall shapes echo the repeated rectangles seen in the interior design of the building; however, the strong curvilinearity of the relief figures counteract these straight lines and regular geometric forms.[140]

The rectangular massiveness of these three-dimensional ceramic murals became a critical issue to be considered when designing the interplay of line, sculptural form and colour. Malach's challenge was to "maintain the tension between the medium and the essence and speak of

[138] Forde, 1983, 3.
[139] Driver, 1983, 21.
[140] Malach used these curvilinear forms, "to counteract all the angles of the area" formed by corners, doorway entrances and elevators." Malach quoted by Robertson in "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone."

delicacy and grace in a translated linear form through an extremely heavy medium." [141] The elongated, tubular body shapes and the decorative repetition of stripes and dots are aspects of the composition that work to counteract the ceramic mass. The murals' sizes required sculptural clay that was heavily tempered and therefore impossible for fine detail, but such a physical limitation was, in fact, not an inconvenience as the mural, sculpturally simplified, was always to be seen from a distance. Glaze choices were also carefully considered in this eighth-floor mural where the colour palette differs from Malach's lobby mural. While shades of blue predominate in the lobby mural, here ochre, brown, and beige are the predominant colours, with accents in blue, white, and black, a palette chosen to take into consideration the artificial pale yellow lights of the hallway that were used in the early 1980s.[142] This light earthy palette also reduces the feeling of bulkiness of the murals that a darker one would have emphasized. The need for legibility across a long composition is accommodated through the relatively simple glazing with large areas left as one colour, while the carved, impressed, and applied decoration create rhythmic accents. Contrasting stripes and decorative patterns counteract the bulk of the mural and guide the eye quickly across the composition. This solution to the mural's particular space within the building is quite different from the many details Malach included through form, colour and texture in her lobby mural which afforded both long and close viewing positions.

In these eighth floor murals, the figures are in such movement that focussing on one body is often impossible, particularly when looking up while waiting for the elevator or when approaching from an angle along the hallway. The width of the hallway and its length make it impossible to understand either of the entire relief murals from one stable viewing point. Either the viewer's whole body or their eyes are in constant movement when trying to grasp the murals' contents. Once again, Potts's observations about how we experience sculpture are valuable as the constantly shifting positions of our bodies in space highlight the element of time involved in our encounter with this mural project. These body-space relationships heighten the lengthwise orientation of the murals, and the movement of the ceramic figures along the murals' lengths mimic the horizontal trajectory of the viewers who move along the hallway. Horizontality disrupts the importance of the vertical movement between the floors implied by the elevators below the murals. It also contrasts with the focus on the vertical movement between floors seen

[141] Lorraine Malach "Artist statement," Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[142] Robertson, "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone."

in Victor Cicansky's *Old Working Class* and *New Working Class* on the first and ninth floors and Robert Billyard's heraldic forms on the second floor.[143] *Untitled*'s energetic, even agitated, composition assures eighth-floor visitors cannot ignore it. Although it cannot be physically touched, it can be visually explored.

Figure: 82
Detail of *Untitled*, north wall elevators, eighth floor Malach, 1982

The abutting and overlapping figures are dynamic, forceful and frozen in action. They stretch and twist in different directions; bodies, arms and legs abut and graze; hands grasp legs and ankles creating body spirals; and bodies swirl and twist and tumble in an amorphous ochre space. Many figures also juggle balls, and have been variously interpreted as soccer players, tumblers, and jugglers.[144] In a 1983 interview Malach referred to them as "jugglers," explaining she had wanted the murals to convey joy but not frivolity, pointing out the expressions on the faces of the figures indicated seriousness about their tasks.[145] Only six of the twenty-eight figures on the longer mural and seven of the fourteen figures on the shorter mural are engaged at various

[143] This will be discussed in more detail in the succeeding chapters on the murals of Cicansky and Billyard.
[144] The figures were interpreted as soccer players by James Ellemers and the unofficial title "The Tumblers" was noted in 1983. Ellemers, 31 May 2008; Robertson, "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone;" Forde, 1983, 3.
[145] Robertson, "Ceramic mural finishes artwork at Sturdy-Stone."

levels of interaction with the balls. The contortions of the remaining figures suggest gymnastic movements of tumblers: while curled figures twirl, others balance on their hands or leap with arched backs into the air. A carnival atmosphere with simultaneous performances is created through the variety of figures and actions.

Figure 83:
Detail of *Untitled*, south wall elevators, eighth floor Malach, 1982

Figure 84:
Detail of *Untitled*, south wall elevators, eighth floor Malach, 1982

Although part of a larger group, each figure is also individualized through costume detail involving references to specific materials, sewing techniques, and patterns. A great range in footwear is evident: boots with buckles, straps or laces that reach from ankle-height to calf-height; shoes with or without straps, spats, or gaiters; and dancing slippers with a strap across the foot or criss-cross laces tied up the calf. This wide range of footwear is equalled by shirt, pant and stocking variations, decorated with striking geometric patterns in contrasting vertical or horizontal arrays of bands or dots, or floral decorations. Figures have plain or variously striped coloured stockings, some even with jingle bells around the ankles. Buckled belts, cummerbunds or sashes emphasize waists or hips, and the plainly glazed and mostly undecorated tunics vary in length from just below the waist to mid-calf. They wear capes, collars, blouses or jackets decorated with stripes, scalloped edges, piping, buttons, beads and floral motifs. The sleeves show the greatest differences with cuffs and layers of clothing articulated through pleats, ruffles and scalloped edges. Even hairstyles, although minimally rendered by regular carved parallel lines, are varied with narrow headbands, the suggestion of beads on a net, and plain caps. These dress styles along with their tailoring, sewing, and leatherwork techniques recall various historical European costume trends attached to performances and entertainments such as carnivals or folk dancing displays.

An important question regarding these eighth floor murals, *Untitled* 1982, is how they pertain to Saskatchewan, the theme of the building's decorative program. Specific provincial references are more evident in the exterior murals or Cicansky's, and Billyard's interior ones that represent identifiable landscape elements, people and their occupations, or nature emblems. I suggest a connection can be made through the theme of multiculturalism. As a young person of Polish descent, growing up as part of the congregation of St. Anthony's, the Polish Catholic parish in Regina, Malach was exposed to Polish cultural traditions such as folk dances, music, and special foods within the context of community activities.[146] The importance of these outward signs of cultural heritage featured prominently as markers of the Canadian mosaic, and throughout the 1930s and 1940s Polish folk dancing and music were performed at festivals throughout Saskatchewan.[147] In the 1970s the new promise of Canada and Saskatchewan as

[146] "Regina Deanery II -St. Anthony," in *Archdiocese of Regina: A History*, ed. Roy Hodsman, (Regina: Archdiocese of Regina, 1988), 304-308.
[147] Ibid, 305-6.

multicultural havens revived interest in these cultural markers. In this sense, the eighth floor mural continues the celebration of the European settlers of Saskatchewan, a theme consistent with the discourses of multiculturalism prominent at the time.

Lineage

Carnival performance as an entertainment theme, is an extension of the musical references in the lobby mural, and is in fact grew from earlier works: a high relief, 7 ft. x 3 ½ ft, stoneware mural, *Carnival*, and later a 1979 glazed maquette, *The Entertainers,* 1979, that Malach hoped to realize as a monumental work.[148] However, the size she envisioned for *The Entertainers* would have required an equally monumental architectural space, and only sections measuring about 4 ft. x 8 ft were eventually completed. These comprised *The Opera Singer,* 1979 and one untitled that represents a heavily pregnant woman.[149] Sections of this maquette were also included in her 1981 *Exultation of Saint Francis into Heaven* Port Alberni mural, such as groups of singers and individual musicians. Sculptural murals were thrilling for Malach to produce. Regarding *Carnival*, she recounted "the challenge and "excitement" involved in the translation of her idea from paper to clay where the "linear concepts become three-dimensional and illusory space becomes a surface reality; light and shadow are determined by the shapes themselves and vary according to the actual light source," adding she needed "to exploit" these conditions.[150] The challenges of this translation from linearity to sculptural surface can be seen when a photograph of the 5 ft x 3½ ft. maquette for *The Entertainers* is compared to the original scale ink drawing. In the bold linear black and white drawing the abstracted masses of the forms are blocked out with defined lines, while in the glazed maquette the forms become less distinct through the detailed carved surfaces and the application of the glazes.

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[148] Charles R. Watrall, 1976, 24. At her death in 2003 she was still in possession of this work. Photo in Lorraine Malach archives, private collection. Shortly after it was completed *The Entertainers* maquette was acquired by Canadian conductor, Timothy Vernon, a close friend of Malach. Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, Lorraine Malach archives private collection.

[149] The Opera Singer was still in Malach's possession when she died in 2003, as she favoured this mural above all her others. It is now part of her estate. Syl Kramer, 6 Sept. 2010.

[150] Lorraine Malach "Artist statement," Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

Figure 85: Maquette for the Entertainers, c 1976. Note the tumblers and acrobats stretched vertically on the right side

A close examination of this study makes clear it served as a starting point for the eighth floor murals. The left sides of the drawings and the maquette are comprised of a vertical composition of tumblers and jugglers that echo the horizontal positions of the figures on the eighth floor mural. Documentation of Malach's research for this mural is evident in her sketchbooks of the period, which include studies of pattern and form, abstracted elongated torsos, and children playing a variety of ball games or jumping and balance challenges. Many of these are executed in a watercolour colour palette similar to her mural glazes.[151] Taking into account the history of these murals, it is obvious they were born only after a long gestation.

Untitled 1983 conforms closely to figurative styles employed by European modernist painters of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and Egyptian and Asian figurative sculpture. The articulation of the prominent heads with the bodies with elimination of the neck,

[151] Sketch Books 1979-1982, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

and the enlarged hands and feet recall Henri Rousseau's late-nineteenth century works, while their free-flying twisted and exaggerated forms echo those of Marc Chagall. Anchoring this figuration in early twentieth-century modernism was logical for Malach who was dedicated to Catholic religious art as student,[152] and who closely followed the edicts of Vatican II in the 1960s.[153] Debates within the Catholic Church about appropriate artistic vocabulary and materials were abundant during the post-war years throughout Europe and North America, and the design of churches and their decoration were the sources of discussion in architectural, art and religious journals.[154] Modern art challenged traditional religious representation, but also offered a renewal for sacred, liturgical and religious art. Malach's simplified polychrome terra cotta human forms, which elicit monumentality through their abstraction was a common practice in this form of religious art that visually communicated the doctrine of universality of the Church through the supposed universality of modernism. Such a choice of style was critiqued by many feminist scholars and critics of the period that saw it as perpetuating the patriarchy of which modernism was a manifestation, expressed succinctly in Lucy Lippard's 1980 statement: "Feminism's greatest contribution to the future of art has probably been precisely its *lack* of contribution to modernism."[155] Malach's work that consistently used modernist vocabulary as a feminist intervention into patriarchal spaces, whether religious or political, challenged Lippard's statement and marginalized her work within feminist discourse that looked to more radical vocabularies.

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[152] Malach created several works on religious themes while at the Philadelphia Academy of Art, describing them to her mother in letters 1955-56. Lorraine Malach letters to her mother, 1955-1956, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

[153] Marcos Barbosa O.S.B., "Sacred Art," in *The Liturgy of Vatican ii: A Symposium in Two Volumes,* ed. William Baraúna, English edition, Jovian Lang, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), 255; Father MacDonald, 13 Sept. 2010.

[154] See for example: Raphael Hume et al, "Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Meeting, April 2, 1951" *Liturgical Arts* 19, no.3 (May 1951): 55-62. The general topic was "The Problem of Decoration in Church Buildings". Peter Larisey, S.J. "Church Art and Church Architecture – Wanted Advice," *Canadian Art*, 22, no 1. (Jan.Feb. 1965):12-13; Peter Larisey, S.J., "Enriching the Spiritual Life," *Canadian Art* 23, no.102 (July 1966): 38-41. The Vatican II discussion emphasized that "Christian and sacred art, more than any others, must be the embodiment of the Christian message, here and now….we should….be the children of our time."[154] While the discussion acknowledges that purely non-figurative art can "create a climate of prayer and joy," it is pointed out the "human body is a central fact in Christianity." Barbosa O.S.B., 1966, 255.

[155] Lucy Lippard, "Sweeping Changes: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s," *Art Journal* 40, no. 1/2 (Fall Winter, 1980): 362.

Installation and Reception

The two murals were installed over a three-week period by Ketler, with the help of Malach.[156] She wrote in detail about this experience remarking on the transformation of her role from artist to labourer in the mounting process, acknowledging the artistic sophistication of the eighth-floor clientele and her outrage at the daily bureaucratic supervision of the new provincial government she felt undermined her professional integrity. This change in affairs reflected the different attitude regarding the importance of the ceramicists and the mural program with the change of government. While Malach had been prepared to assist Ketler, she was surprised that she was to be Ketler's *only* assistant in this process, "which meant absolute slog." She described how "[a]t the end of each day, covered with cement dust from drilling anchor bolts and epoxy glue, I would force down an evening meal and drop into bed." But she also enjoyed the protracted daily contact with the mural's audience who communicated their impressions of her mural. The eighth floor was home to the province's Department of Mines where about one hundred people worked at various jobs including "geologists, draftsmen, computer analysts, (mostly women) secretaries and heads of various departments." Malach remarked on the presence "in each office [of] at least two local artists' watercolours or oils," also observing this audience had "been looking at all the other murals now for years and that simple exposure does make a difference. Both these factors led her to believe that her audience "had better eyes for art than most." She was pleased about the excitement the work generated when it was laid out on the floor, and fascinated by the interpretations of those who did not immediately see the tumblers, as she called her figures. She noted comments that associated it with "inca-aztec work," (sic) or Mexican, or even "cannibals." She remarked that one "Indian surveyor asked me if the mural depicted 'Native Rights.'"[157] Such remarks indicate the audience's recognition of familiar historical styles, but in the case of the 'Indian Rights' also an expectation that these issues could plausibly be, and perhaps should be, addressed in the public ceramic mural art of the Sturdy-Stone building. While the reception by the workers who encountered it was positive and gave her an insight into how her murals might be interpreted, Malach was annoyed by the daily bureaucratic supervision she described as "simply disgusting."

[156] Malach's letters make no mention of remuneration for her part in the installation. However, Ketler was adamant he paid all the artists for their help in installation.
[157] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Karmer, March 1983, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.

> On a daily basis, at 4 o'clock a man from the public works came down from the 10th floor offices to snap a polaroid (sic) instamatic photo of how much work we had done that day…I told the fellow it was pointless, since we were doing it as fast and best as possible and since there were no more murals to come, it was a useless endeavour since the information wouldn't be used for the future, but he still came everyday anyway. We threw a monkey wrench into the works tho (sic), by working Sat's (sic) and Sundays – and so their progress report became useless after Monday.[158]

This irritation was mitigated by the appreciation of the Department of Mines employees who presented Malach and Ketler with "toques and Scheaffer pens as a token of enjoying [their] company," and Malach considered the mural "best to date" in terms of its integration into the architectural space.[159]

Figure 86: Malach and Ketler installing tenth floor murals, March 1983

[158] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Karmer, March 1983
[159] Ibid.

Despite the appreciation for these impressive relief murals, there has been only one photo in the media of a partial image when it was being mounted. Like the human eye, the camera eye has difficulty accommodating the size and shape of the murals. If a regular lens is used, it is impossible to include either complete murals from a frontal angle, and while the subject is magnified, the distance is compressed resulting in a blurring of the background. Only a wide-angle lens can capture an individual mural in a single photo from a frontal viewpoint, but because the murals are situated above the elevator doors, it is impossible, without a ladder, to ensure the camera lens is perpendicular to the mural to avoid distortions. I suggest these difficulties discourage official photos, the reproduction of these murals in print media, and the dissemination to the public of Malach's work.

How the Murals Made Malach

Recognizing the hybridity of things through the co-constitution of objects and people is one of the purposes of this study, and thus agency flows in both directions between humans and objects, activated at their interface. The social world constructed by people *and* things is evident in Malach's interactions with the world. As such, we must consider not only how Malach shaped the clay but how the clay shaped Malach. The manipulation of tons of wet clay, pounding it into slabs and hefting the sculptured tiles as they were increasingly refined was exhausting physical work.[160] The size of both these Sturdy-Stone projects obliged Malach to be available at all times to respond to the different stages of making as described and to assure successful firings. The nature of the manually operated electric kiln required her constant supervision to assure a proper and efficient heating and cooling schedule would eliminate or diminish cracking and explosion of the large thick, complex pieces. Because she worked in her basement studio she would not answer the phone or the door, leaving the impression she was gone or refused friendly overtures. These working conditions curtailed her social life and resulted in her reputation as a loner, an eccentric, and even a recluse,[161] a process she called going "into seclusion."[162] After a large commission, Malach was completely worn out from the physical, mental, and emotional labour, needing a few weeks to recover, time used for intellectual and emotional renewal through avidly

[160] One of the sections of the lobby mural weighed sixty pounds. Ketler, 26 May 2011.
[161] This information was imparted in conversation with the author by several friends of Malach, including: Brother Tessier, 31 Aug, 2010; Father MacDonald, 13 Sept. 2010; Syl Kramer, 8 Sept. 2010.
[162] Lorraine Malach quoted in Carlson, 1982, 4.

reading books and journals in science and religious studies, keeping up with the latest ideas. These scholarly pursuits greatly contributed to her reputation as an intellectual, and Malach maintained these alternating work/rest rhythms throughout her life. [163] She commented on the effect her work had on her social life:

> When I'm working, I don't have much time at all. There has to be a decision made, that in the short term, I have to not see people in order to give something to people on a long term basis…It's very difficult to do. I like people very much, and I rely heavily on my friends. But at the end of the day, there isn't any space left over.[164]

The period between 1976 was exceptionally busy for Malach but by 1983, when the last Sturdy-Stone mural was completed she was exhausted with the "accumulation of weariness from literally years of discipline with the work."[165]

Despite the social, physical, mental, and emotional toll these mural projects entailed, they freed Malach from teaching projects. The three SAB material awards she received and the Senior Arts Award in 1980 validated her work and allowed her to realize her mural projects, and purchase her own kiln. Major commissions enabled her to concentrate her energies in the ceramic mural field and therefore facilitated her technical and artistic exploration. She was freed to work out the structural and compositional complexities of massive murals at a time when this knowledge was at a premium in English-speaking Canada. The Sturdy-Stone murals led to several articles in local newspapers with one television interview recognizing the fifty-year old Malach as a successful and skilful ceramicist, capable of tackling monumental projects. The murals, however, also curtailed her recognition as an "artist" within traditional institutional structures. The National Gallery of Canada file on Lorraine Malach ceased in 1976 with her last major painting exhibition. The prominence of her murals and her concentration on them, rather than painting exhibitions, has also resulted in the perceived diminishment of the potential commodity value of her paintings in galleries.[166] Malach's major ceramic murals thus impacted negatively on her paintings as commodities within the art market and long-term national recognition of her as an artist.

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[163] Lorraine Malach, letters to Dolores Kramer throughout the 1980s detailing books she had read and her thoughts about the contents. Lorraine Malach archives, private collection.
[164] Driver, 1983, 21.
[165] Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, March 1983, Lorraine Malach Archives.
[166] Kutarna, 31 August, 2010. He pointed out this assessment was made by a Regina gallery owner.

After this active mural period the monumental ceramic mural commissions diminished, even though Malach actively pursued them. Ironically, Malach's major patron continued to be the Catholic Church, despite her opposition to its official stance regarding women's place within the doctrines and practices of the church. These commissions were secured because of a network of personal contacts with members of the clergy whom she did respect and who respected her.[167] Not all of these projects were successful. In the mid-1980s she pinned her hopes on a mural for St Joseph's Basilica, Edmonton only to be refused due to diocesan financial constraints.[168] Another unsuccessful project involved a ceramic mural she proposed for the Expo '86 Saskatchewan pavilion in Vancouver, an award-winning building designed in the shape of a grain elevator by the well-known Regina architect, Gordon Arnott. [169] Despite these disappointments she finished a major free-standing ceramic mural mounted on a curved surface, *Glorious Mysteries,* 1988, for Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina, mounted by Ketler, as he was the only one who had accumulated enough technical expertise to address its particular technical challenges.[170] Smaller projects also sustained her and allowed her to maintain the making, glazing and firing skills she had acquired.[171] Twenty years elapsed before Malach received a commission for another monumental project for a secular space, the entrance hall of the Royal Tyrrell Museum, Drumheller Alberta, arranged only because she volunteered her time for the two years it took to complete it.[172] The Sturdy-Stone murals assured she won this commission

[167] An exception to this was a 1993 twenty-four square foot mural Malach was commissioned to produce for the Joanne Goulet Golf Course, part of the city of Regina's municipal courses. This course was the first golf course in Canada named after a woman, and therefore to commission a mural by a woman muralist of such high standing was quite appropriate. Goulet won civic, provincial and national championships and made her mark internationally at the British Open. Daria Coneghan, Holden Stoffel "Joanne Goulet," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/goulet_joanne_1935-.html.

[168] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer, 12 Feb. 1984; Lorraine Malach letters to Dolores Kramer, nd, Lorraine Malach archives, private collection. In one letter Malach describes the subject matter of the 2 ft x 3 ft maquette that is based on the middle section of the Apocalypse of St. John, "which deals mainly with the glories of the heavens."

[169] Lorraine Malach letter to Dolores Kramer 6 May, 1985; William P. Thompson, "Gordon Ryan Arnott," The Canadian Encyclopedia, (15 Aug. 2007), accessed 16 May 2013, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/gordon-ryan-arnott. See also Fonds Arnott, Gordon Ryan, "1926-1996, Biographical History," SAIN Collections, Saskatchewan Archival Information Network, accessed 16 May 2013, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/gordon-arnott-fonds;rad.

[170] Ketler, May 2011. Jake's wife, Eleanor, acted as an assistant on this project.

[171]These murals include Campion College, University of Regina, Regina, 1990, 8x2ft; Joanne Goulet Golf Course, Regina, 1993, 8 x 3 ft; St. Anthony's School, Drumheller Alberta, 1994, 8x4 ft.; Holy Family Church St. Albert, Alberta, 1998, 4 x 1 ft; Monsignor Neville Anderson School, Calgary Alberta, 2000, 6 x 4 ft.

[172] Malach actually died before completing *The Story of Life* in 2003. Two panels were fired after her death and the murals was left unglazed, although a protective coating was applied. It was mounted in the entrance hall of the

for *The Story of Life* in 2000*,* as they indicated to the commissioning officer that Malach was capable of working within the norms and specifications of a government agency and within the context of a public space.[173]

Figure 87: *Glorious Mysteries,* Malach, 1988

A Feminist History

An assumption based on gender roles that large-scale work was out of women's reach was current during the 1970s, and is still encountered today.[174] The diminutive stature of several women ceramic sculptors was regularly commented upon in the media and in conversations. In every interview the author conducted regarding Malach's work, her small size was emphasized in regards to the physicality of the work and the massiveness of the murals. In fact, working big was an important strategy in the quest for artistic legitimacy for other women ceramicists at the time. Viola Frey, a California figurative ceramic sculptor who made large-scale figures in the

Royal Tyrell Museum, Drumheller, Alberta by Jake and Eleanor Ketler. See Susan Surette, "*The Story of Life:* A Ceramic Mural by Lorraine Malach, *Journal of Canadian Art History* 33, no.2 (2012): 75-79;

[173] Dr. Paul Johnston, phone interview with the author, Calgary, 2 Nov. 2010.

[174] The author, as well as Akycha Surette, both ceramicists who make large relief murals, have recently encountered this assumption about authorship when engaging with the public about their works in gallery and juried craft exhibitions.

1970s and 1980s, "realized increased scale conferred greater impact and credibility."[175] This was especially pertinent as the diminutive stature of Frey, like Malach, was commented upon in relation to the physicality needed to manipulate the materials and the monumentality of her final sculptures.[176] Arthur Danto has observed that during this period many ceramic artists of both sexes in the United States, who wished to insert their work into the domain of art, needed to distance themselves from associations with craft that included small-scale and the domestic.[177] Monumentality in the public domain was the antithesis of craft, women, and the domestic, and therefore particularly important for women.[178] Ruth Duckworth, another American ceramicist working in murals at the same time as Malach was also a small woman, whose stature was considered remarkable in contrast to her monumental murals. She stated, "I love working large, maybe because I'm small."[179] Monumental works in public spaces were especially important for women in ceramics who struggled for legitimacy within the male-dominated art world of that period, and it hopefully assured that works by women, including Malach, would be seen and recognized as ceramic art.[180]

A feminist history of Malach as a sculptor also inserts her within the lineage of earlier Canadian female relief sculptors who successfully produced remarkable murals for the public realm. Not one review of Malach's work, however, linked her to this tradition that include Frances Loring, Florence Wyle, Elizabeth Wyn Wood, Jacobine Jones and Eleanor Milne, all of whom practiced in Ontario. This is perhaps not surprising as the majority of these sculptors' works were located in central Canada and Canadian feminist art history scholarship was nascent. This omission, however, points out the professional isolation within which Malach worked regarding the broader reception of these important public works, unrecognized within a history

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[175] Patterson Sims, "Viola Frey: Emphatically Present," in *Bigger, Better, More: The Art of Viola Frey,* ed. Davira S. Taragin, Patterson Sims, and Susan Jeffries, (New York and Manchester: Racine Art Museum and Gardiner Museum, 2009), 64.
[176] Alidë Kohlhaas, "Viola Frey: Powerful Images," *Lancette Arts Journal*, (Sept. 2009): 7.
[177] Danto, 2007, 68-70.
[178] Alfoldy, 2012, 68-70.
[179] Ruth Duckworth quoted in Jeff Huebner, "In Good Hands: Working from her studio in a former pickle factory in Ravenswood, world-famous ceramic artist Ruth Duckworth can make clay do just about anything," *Chicago Reader,* 26 (Sept. 2002), accessed 20 May 2013, http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/in-good-hands/Content?oid=909772.
[180] The marginalization of women's ceramic sculpture is evident by its omission in a 1984 MA Thesis on Canadian ceramic sculpture, including Malach's sculptural murals as well as Ann James and Beth Hone. It concentrated only on the works of men associated with the Regina Clay movement of the 1970s. Wendy A. Marshall, "Contemporary Canadian Clay Sculpture," (Master's thesis Carleton University, 1984).

of public art contributions. In the context of a 1983 London Ontario Regional Art Gallery exhibition, *Visions and Victories: 10 Canadian Women Artists 1914-1945,* Jacobine Jones's biographer, Nathalie Luckyj, notes the " 'rediscovery' of four powerful women sculptors – Frances Loring, Florence Wyle, Elizabeth Wyn Wood, and Jacobine Jones"[181] Importantly this "rediscovery" coincided with the year Malach installed the second of her Sturdy-Stone murals, evidently within a Canadian art world where, within one generation, successful women public sculptors could be quickly lost or forgotten. The marginalization of Canadian women sculptors continued into the next decade as evidenced in Maria Tippett's *By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women,* which glaringly minimizes the contribution of women sculptors while privileging painting.[182] Importantly, Tippett also glosses over the key role Loring, Wyle and Wyn Wood played in the 1928 establishment of the Sculptors' Society of Canada which emerged as the only nationally based forum for Canadian sculptors.[183] This, of course, is tied to the established hierarchies within the academy, but also points out how, in order to address women's cultural contributions, these assumed hierarchies must be challenged.

Malach's choice of clay as a legitimate sculptural medium, a material associated with functional craft and the sculptural sketch, further removed her from academic recognition. During the formative years of these early Canadian women sculptors, clay served for model sketches but was not considered for "true sculpture;" the objective was to move from clay to stone, with direct carving an even loftier goal, especially important to women working within the male dominated sculpture traditions.[184] However Wyle, Loring, and Jones all used clay effectively to produce full-scale models of works to be completed in stone or bronze.[185] Loring, Wyle, Wyn Wood, and Jones were key participants in the development of sculpture in Canada in the interwar years and even into the 1950s, with major public art commissions involving stone

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[181] Nathalie Luckyj, *Put on Her Mettle: The Life and Art of Jacobine Jones*, (Newcastle Ontario: Penumbra Press, 1992), 1.
[182] Jacobine Jones is only once mentioned and erroneously according to her biographer Nathalie Luckyj. Luckyj, 1992, 1. Although Loring, Wyle and Wyn Wood have several mentions, their major public reliefs are ignored. Eleanor Milne, despite her highly visible work in the Canadian Parliament buildings is not spoken about at all. Maria Tippett, *By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women,* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1992).
[183] Christine Boyanoski, "Sculpture before 1960," in *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Anne Whitelaw, Brian Foss and Sandra Paikowsky, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010), 245; Tippett, 1992, 67.
[184] Harold Brownsword, *Polytechnic Magazine,* (July 1946) quoted in Luckyj, 1992, 10.
[185] See respectively: Christine Boyanoski, *Loring and Wyle: Sculptors' Legacy,* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987), fig. 35, xiv, 2; Luckyj, 1992, 57, 67, 82.

reliefs on buildings in the modernist neo-classical style.[186] Their stone carvings all adhered to what has been identified as a classical adaptation of the beaux art style, a sculptural approach international in scope that employed a figurative representation understood within broadly-based civic ideals.[187] These simplified figures were popular with many architects of this period, who Luckyj suggests "willingly incorporated sculpture as an integral element in their designs."[188] Stone sculpture was also the medium of Eleanor Milne who executed reliefs combining Gothic techniques and Romanesque forms in the early 1960s for the rotunda of the neo-Gothic Canadian Parliament Buildings. Like the women sculptors before her, Milne turned to clay as a preparatory material.[189] Malach continues this rich tradition of Canadian women sculptors, working instead in ceramics. This study places her within this lineage and legitimizes her choice of medium.

Figure 88: Eleanor Milne at work Stone relief sculpture for the foyer of the House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario, with (L to R) assistants Anton Nielsen and Joseph Joanisse

[186] Among these are Wyn Wood's Welland-Crowland War Memorial, 1934-39, contributions to the Rainbow Bridge, 1940-42 and the Saskatchewan and Manitoba panels for Toronto's Bank of Montreal Building, 1947-48. Loring, Wyle and Jones also each contributed two relief panels to the Bank of Montreal project. Among Jones's prestigious projects are *The Trades of Canada* for the Bank of Canada, 1938, and the sculptures of Champlain, Wolfe, Simcoe and Brock for the Archives Building, 1949-51. Loring and Wyle collaborated on a series of WWI war workers as part of the War Record 1918-1919 as well as well as the Harry Oakes Pavillion at Niagara Falls, 1938. Wyle also produced reliefs for the Toronto General Hospital, 1919-21, and the Alberta Red Cross Crippled Children's Hospital in Calgary, 1950-51. Other major works by Loring included *The Osgoode Hall War Memorial*, 1928, *Recording Angel* and *War Widow,* Memorial Chamber Parliament Buildings, 1928, and *The Queen Elizabeth Monument,* 1939-40. "Artists Database: Wood, Elizabeth Wyn," Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, accessed 22 May, 2013, http://cwahi.concordia.ca/sources/artists/displayArtist.php?ID_artist=58; Victoria Baker, *Emanuel Hahn and Elizabeth Wyn Wood: Tradition and Innovation in Canadian Sculpture,* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1997), 85; Luckyj, 1992, 51-56, 73-75; Christine Boyanoski, 1987, 21-23, 31, 35, 37-39, 48, 59, 117.

[187] Joan Coutu, "A Drive through Canadian History: People, Cars and Public Art at Niagara Falls in the 1930s," in *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives,* ed. Annie Gérin, and James McLean, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 52-53; Luckyj, 1992, 46.

[188] Luckyj, 1992, 46.

[189] K Barbara Lambert, R. Eleanor Milne, and Eleanor Moore, *Captured in Stone: Carving Canada's Past.* (Newcastle Ontario: Penumbra Press, 2002), 18.

In the mid-1960s, new materials such as steel, polyesters, and plastics and new sculpture techniques involving assemblage were embraced by a younger generation, a fact recognized in 1962 within an issue of Canadian Art dedicated to sculpture.[190] This was precisely the time that Malach, with the Catholic Church as her main client, began to explore clay through modelling and carving as a sculptural form in line with the discussions and directives emerging from Vatican II that saw craft materials and practices as important. Her insistence on traditional sculptural techniques for large scale works ran counter to the new emphasis on assemblage, welding, casting and other industrial techniques, situating her on the margins of contemporary sculpture discourse and practices. Clay meant, however, that she could and would be included within the fledgling craft community, who was expanding its institutional territory and influence.[191]

Marginalized within contemporary sculpture discourse, Malach's murals saw a space open up for them within the branch of the craft community that included the allied arts. Clay/ceramics, textile, glass, and metal work generally fell into this category, and these were promoted as a companion to architecture with the founding of the Canadian Craftsmen's Association in 1967. That year Anita Aarons commented in the *Journal RAIC* on the potential of crafts to enter into a fruitful association with architecture.[192] Much of the work done by women during the 1960s and into 1980s was, however, in the textile arts, not ceramic reliefs, including large-scale public and corporate commissions. Alfoldy points out the works of these women were well received and certainly promoted the role Canadian women had to play in the applied arts, bringing the intimacy of craft and the domestic familiarity of textile materials and techniques into the public realm.[193] The emergence of feminist debates during the 1970s that included the historical association of women with textile production and its impact on gender roles and Western art hierarchies contributed to the high profile accored these textile works.[194]

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[190] Boyanoski, 1987, 62.
[191] This period in Canadian Craft is extensively documented in Sandra Alfoldy, *Crafting Identity: the Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada,* (Montreal& Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005).
[192] Anita Aarons, "An Absent Minded Attitude and Events," *Journal RAIC – L'IRAC* 44 no.10 (October 1967): 23.
[193] Sandra Alfoldy has included a discussion of the works of these women in Alfoldy, 2012. They include Helen Frances Gregor, Joyce Wieland, Tamara Jaworska, Gathie Falk, Charlotte Lindgren, Mariette Rousseau Vermette, Micheline Beauchemin, Katherine Dickerson, and Charlotte Lindgren, and Joanne Staniszkis. This is not an exhaustive list.
[194] For an extensive discussion of this period in the United States see Elissa Auther, *String, Felt, and Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art.*(Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). For discussions on specific fibre artists in Canada see: Laurier Lacroix, *Micheline Beauchemin,* (Outremont: Les

While textiles dominated women's contribution to public art at this time, other women, such as Greta Dale who worked out of Toronto and Gathie Falk of Vancouver, executed ceramic mural commissions. Dale's ceramic reliefs "both figurative and non-figurative" and covered with overall designs, were created for the lobby of Sarco Co. in Scarborough Ontario, c1965 and in Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Beaconsfield Québec,[195] but her most prestigious mural commission is in the lobby of the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall, c1967. This mural with its abstract figures representing spectators and performers incorporates the modernist notion of the universality of the arts and truth.[196] Falk's *Veneration of the White Collar Worker, Nos. 1&2*, 1973, designed for the cafeteria of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, engaged with class and labour matters.[197] Overall, there has been a lack of art historical research about the women of this time period working in public art ceramic murals. Greta Dale did obtain some minor publicity upon the completion of her commissions from Anita Aaorns who briefly mentioned her in her Allied Arts column for the national publication, *Journal RAIC*. Gathie Falk's mural received more publicity and subsequent interest, both because of its location in a prominent federal government building in Ottawa and because of her subsequent national profile for her painting and multi-media work.[198] While there were only a few women working in ceramic reliefs for public commissions, Malach was definitely not alone, although she may have felt so.

Éditions du Passage, 2009); Anne Newlands, "Mariette Rousseau-Vermette: Journey of a Painter-weaver from the 1940s through the 1960s," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 32, no.2 (June 2011): 74-103; Iris Nowell, *Joyce Wieland: A Life in Art,* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2001).

[195] Anita Aarons, "Miscellaneous Happenings: Art and Architecture," *Journal RAIC- L'IRAC* 42, no.8 (Aug. 1965): 14. Thanks to Dr. Anne Whitelaw for bringing these Briarwood Presbyterian Church murals to my attention. Virginia Bell, "About the Front Doors," November Newsletter, Briarwood Presbyterian Church, (November 2013): 4-5. Dale's ceramic murals are attached to the front doors of the church and are found as well within the sanctuary.

[196] "Greta Dale Mural Interpretation," email to the author from Dennis Perko, Director, Theatre and Sound Stage Operations, Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation, 10 June 2012.

[197] Alfoldy, 2012, 143-4, 147-8.

[198] Falk has embraced many media including painting, drawing and performance art. She has received national awards such as: the Gershon Iskowitz Prize for her contribution to Canadian art, 1990, the Order of Canada, 1997, the Governor General's Award in Visual Arts, 2003. Ann Rosenberg, "Gathie Falk," The Canadian Encyclopedia, (12 Nov. 2008), accessed 22 May 2013, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/gathie-falk. See also Alfoldy, 2012, 143-4, 147-8; Bruce Grenville, *Gathie Falk,* (Vancouver: Douglas& McIntyre, 2000).

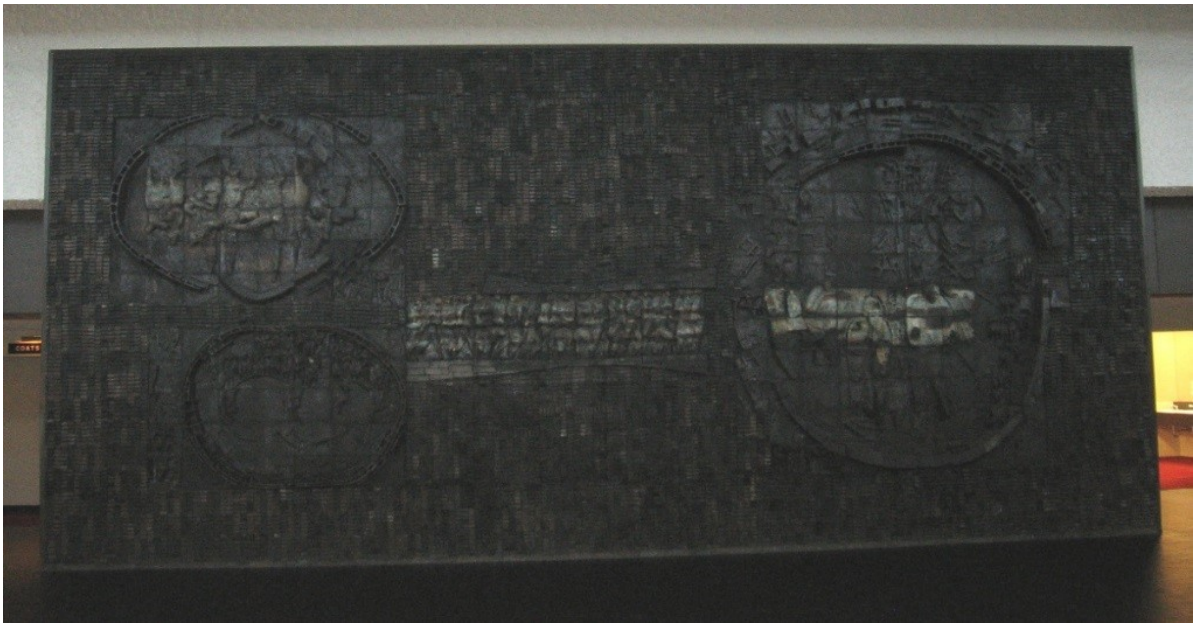

Figure 89: Centennial Concert hall Mural, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1967

Lack of publicity regarding Malach's murals could be attributed to the dominance of national publications by the central Canadian press, and a subsequent ignorance of activities in western Canada. This was particularly acute in the field of craft that was regionally focussed, and continued a situation that prevailed in first half of the twentieth century found, carefully documented in Sandra Flood's study, *Craft and Museum Practices.*[199] Regionalism was exasperated by the 1974 demise of the one brief national publication dedicated to crafts, *The Craftsman/L'Artisan,* begun in 1968 upon the establishment of the Canadian Craftsman's Association. Because feminist scholarship was nascent there was hesitation among some members of the arts community to specifically highlight women's accomplishments. Such limited local publicity also has affected more current histories of ceramics and the applied arts in Canada where Malach has still been omitted from recent publications including Crawford's *Studio Ceramics in Canada,* 2005, and Alfoldy's *The Allied Arts: Architecture and Craft in Postwar Canada,* 2012. It is worth emphasizing the works of all of these women sculptors, textile artists and ceramic muralists, including Malach, have been brought to the attention of the public by and large through the work of women writers who contributed articles in newspapers, catalogues, and professional publications, and, now, in historical accounts and scholarly texts.

[199] Sandra Flood, *Canadian Craft and Museum Practice 1900-1950,* Mercury Series Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Paper 74, (Hull Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2001), 27-29.

Luckily Malach's work was reviewed by local Saskatchewan city newspapers, the regional arts magazine and even the national Christian Science Monitor, but all of these positioned her within a local context. While this coverage assured that some textual trail would remain regarding her works, her Sturdy-Stone projects were never acknowledged on a national level. As a prairie woman she did not adopt the avant-garde feminist vocabulary current within the Regina clay community that was confrontational in content or style or both, and which propelled James, Levine, and Keelan onto the national and international stages. Malach's choice of material, technique and vocabulary, as well as her gender, assured her a place in provincial history, but worked equally against her in terms of a broader recognition.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter close attention has been accorded to Malach's artistic training and experience, the development of her stylistic vocabulary, the processes she adopted and adapted for her clay work, and the formal elements of the murals. This methodology facilitated the tracing of several networks where these functioned as important mediators that contribute to group formations. Some of these hybrid groups, involving people, materials, technologies and processes stretch from the della Robbia workshops, through the use of clay by early-twentieth century sculptors to Malach's production of the Sturdy-Stone murals and even beyond. They are key in the development and circulation of the idea of professional ceramics often constrained by a rigid and exclusive Western hierarchy of the arts. The material, modernist forms, sculptural and glazing techniques, and authorship of Malach's Sturdy-Stone murals have contributed a woman's voice to the Sturdy-Stone mural project that I argue is feminist and critical to a feminist Canadian ceramic history, a feminist history of the applied arts, and feminist craft history. Through the formal arrangements of their compelling relief surfaces they project the presence of a professional woman into this architectural and political space, one commissioned, designed, and built by men. Documenting professional, ethnic and gender mediators facilitated the tracing of multiple group formations involving institutions such as the SCC and the SAB, the Polish-Canadian community, and American and Canadian women working in the allied arts. These women were often unaware of each other and such a perception of gender and professional isolation perpetuates the notion that they did not belong, except as exceptions, in this art milieu. Through re-establishing the connections, their important group membership based on gender and

material is reformed. Human/non-human hybrid groups involving users of the Sturdy-Stone spaces in conjunction with the murals, lights, chairs, doors and elevators, come together as actants in the formation of what is understood as professional ceramics, art and women's art, because the efficacy of the category is co-shaped with these hybrid groups. The murals and Malach made one another, physically, socially, and emotionally. As much as I shape them through this text, they in turn shape my history as a woman ceramicist and feminist art historian. The successful execution of fabrication is part of the wonder attached to art works, as Gell suggests, but this wonder contributes to the development of a community of professional Canadian ceramicists in general, and Canadian women ceramicists in particular.

CHAPTER 7

WORKING CRAFT, WORKING CLASS: *THE OLD WORKING CLASS*, 1977 AND *THE NEW WORKING CLASS*, 1981, VICTOR CICANSKY

Introduction

Victor Cicansky's five high-relief sculptural murals, *The Old Working Class,* comprise the second interior mural project the visitor encounters inside the Sturdy-Stone Centre. Each 5 ft. x 6 ft. x 18 in. (152.5 cm. x 183 cm. x approx.38 cm) mural extends from the top of the ground floor elevators to the ceiling. *The Old Working Class* terra cottas are highly visible from the entrance lobby because of the bright spot lighting, and their physical prominence almost draws one to the elevators; these figures guard the gateway to the upper floors of the building. While the monochrome rust-toned murals stand out against the pebbly concrete polished walls and the hexagonal floor tiles, they also are in harmony with these earthy surfaces. Fifteen life-size figures from a farming community, surrounded by animals and poultry, gaze down upon the viewer who, child-like, looks up at her elders. The focussed lighting enhances the theatrical effect of the figures through the dramatic cast shadows of the relief sculpture, but the predominance of rounded sculptural forms ensure these shadows are not angular and threatening. Irregular in form, the murals are not contained within a geometric grid, and some in an expansive gesture even extend slightly over the frame of the elevator doors, exuding energy as well as solidity. Their visual power calls attention to their actual physical heaviness, and ultimately contributes to their metaphorical weight, stressed through their figurative subject matter. Although humorous at first glance, *The Old Working Class* raises questions about its place as public art, thus plainly addressing significant issues of representation. These five murals challenge the viewer to question how they engage in their social, political, and cultural worlds.

The viewer is immediately struck by the antithesis of the style and subject of *The Old Working Class* to the modernist vocabulary expressed in the exterior murals and Malach's lobby mural. These prominent murals located in a high traffic zone of this provincial government building, have elicited much written comment, including comparisons to folk art, caricature, the

grotesque, and gargoyles, as well as to paintings by Thomas Hart Benton, and Pieter Bruegel.[1] Recognized as honouring life on the land, "celebrat[ing] a way of life which is roughly equal parts struggle and bounty," [2] they have been discursively situated between "fine" and "folk" art, but not identified conclusively as one or the other.[3] Each of the five reliefs corresponds to a vignette of prairie pioneer life, a particular working life experienced by European immigrants who came to Saskatchewan in the early twentieth-century and who survived the hard years of the depression.[4] This tale of survival and adaptation continued in Cicansky's second Sturdy-Stone Centre commission *The New Working Class,* 1981, five colourfully glazed tondos four feet in diameter (122 cm.) and twelve inches (30 cm.) in relief above each of the five ninth-floor elevators. Here, Cicansky turned to his own generation as inspiration, the children born during the depression and the war, the offspring of the pioneers, one or two generations removed from those honoured in *The Old Working Class*. These two mural projects bring representational style, material, and material culture together in a weighty comment about Saskatchewan histories.

This chapter addresses Cicansky's murals within the context of art historian Annie Gérin's suggestion that Canadian public art projects are best appreciated as agents implicated in "the struggle over space…identity, economy and politics that shape Canada."[5] *The Old Working Class* in particular has elicited a variety of reactions, some contradictory, others laudatory and a few quizzical. What is it about these figures that provoke comment? How do they fit into the public art program of ceramic murals of the Sturdy-Stone Centre? How are they to be understood in the context of other public figurative sculpture in Canada? By closely attending to the iconography and formal elements of the murals, and the circumstances in which they were commissioned, fabricated and received, I speak to the relationships among the immigrant experience, social classes, ethnicity, what it means to be Canadian and integration in Saskatchewan. *The Old Working Class* and *The New Working Class* interface with

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[1] Ruth Wright Miller, "Saskatoon," *Arts West* 4, no.6 (Sept/Oct.1979): 10; Eli Mandel, "A Comprehensible World: The Work of Cicansky, Thauberger, Yuristy and Fafard," *Artscanada* 36, issue 230, 231 (Oct/Nov.1979): 15.
[2] Townsend-Gault, 1983, 128.
[3] Eli Mandel, "A Comprehensible World: The Work of Cicansky, Thauberger, Yuristy and Fafard," *Artscanada* 36, issue 230, 231 (Oct/Nov.1979): 15; Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Redefining the Role," in *Visions: Contemporary Art in Canada,* ed. Robert Bringhurst, Geoffrey James, Alvin Balkind, Russell Keziere, (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 128.
[4] Government Services, "Victor Cicansky," in *Sturdy-Stone Artwork: Sturdy-Stone Centre Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,* (Regina: Government of Saskatchewan, 1980), 14.
[5] Annie Gérin, "Introduction: Off Base," in *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives,* ed. Annie Gérin and James S. McLean, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 6.

Saskatchewan's multicultural ideal, the visual ideology called "folk," and ceramics as a vernacular material for public art, and thus function as a node of contestation for citizenship.

I look to Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) keeping in mind Latour's admonition that identifying the actor "reveals the narrow space in which all of the grandiose ingredients of the world begin to be hatched, [and network] explain[s] through which vehicles, which traces, which trails, which types of information, the world is being brought *inside* those places and then, after having been transformed there, are being pumped back *out* of its narrow walls."[6] The significance of context therefore is removed from a panoramic level and focussed again on a specific locale, the Sturdy-Stone Centre murals *The Old Working Class* and *The New Working Class*. In tracing this sociology of associations I take into account material and processes along with the formal elements of the works to define what information these murals "pump" out to their audiences.

Figure 90a: *Old Working Class* Figure 90b: *Old Working Class*
Above the elevators on north wall

[6] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 179-80.



Figure 90c: *Old Working Class* Figure 90d: *Old Working Class F*igure 90e: *Old Working Clas*s Above the elevators on the south wall

"Heroic "Grotesques:" The Old Working Class, 1977

Cicansky's Credentials

The Old Working Class was a result of the first selection of murals organized by James Ellemers through the SAB. Cicansky was a well-known figure in the art and ceramic sculpture communities in Saskatchewan through his participation in the Regina Clay Movement, and teaching experiences in Regina elementary and high schools and as a Professor of Education at the University of Regina.[9] Between 1968 and 1975, Cicansky had participated in six solo exhibitions, four in Saskatchewan, and two in the United States, as well as sixteen group exhibitions at the provincial, national and international levels, all widely reviewed.[10] His humorous sculptures of mundane objects highlight the tension between a common functional

[9] "Victor Cicansky," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making,* ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2005), 118. See also Don Kerr, *The Garden of Art: Victor Cicansky Sculptor,* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press), 7.

[10] "Victor Cicansky," in *Victor Cicansky Clay Sculpture* by Bruce W. Ferguson and Carol A. Philips, (Regina: Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1983), 33. Reviews appeared in the *Regina Leader-Post*, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, *Arts West, The Globe and Mail*, *Artscanada*, the American Crafts Council publication, *Craft Horizons*, and London's *Art and Artists*.

object, a contemplative sculpture and figurine groupings in rural prairie architectural settings that celebrate and critique regional prairie experience while questioning dominant modernist aesthetic ideologies.[11] Cicansky's work was known to the Mackenzie Art Gallery and appeared in the SAB and the Canada Council's Art Bank collections. A recipient of two Canada Council Grants, he was an executive member of CAR (Canadian Artists' Representation, also known as CARFAC or Canadian Artists' Representation Le Front des Artistes Canadiens). He was not a member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, but did act as a judge for exhibitions.[12] As a maker, teacher and organizer, Cicansky, maintained a prominent profile in the Saskatchewan arts community.

Cicansky came to representative sculptural ceramics after a career as an educator and a brief foray into functional pottery. An adult learner who had worked in construction for several years, he completed his B.Ed. in 1965 and earned a B.A. in English and Fine Arts at the University of Saskatoon in Regina in 1967.[13] In the mid-1960s he was introduced to throwing, subsequently improving his throwing skills in the Hone-James studio as well as under Jack Sures at the university, building stoneware vessels in the expressionist style current at the time.[14] Cicansky reported that he enjoyed the basic nature of the material and its interaction with his body, the wheel, and the kiln fire, but rebelled against the repetitiveness demanded of a professional functional potter.[15] His 1965 travels in Europe educated him in art history through memorable encounters with the ceramic tondos of the della Robbia workshop, the Sistine Chapel, Trajan's Column, the Parthenon, and also expanded his knowledge of his own Romanian heritage when he visited his father's natal village.[16] During subsequent ceramic studies in Regina for his B.A. Cicansky explored ceramic sculpture under faculty sculptor Ricardo Gómez who disseminated the ideas and techniques of the new sculptural California Funk ceramics, including

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[11] Bruce W. Ferguson, "Victor Cicansky: The Garden as Vessel," in Ferguson and Philips, 1983, 6, 9.
[12] Correspondence with SCC regarding fee for jury work for the 7th Annual Saskatchewan Handcraft festival, Battleford, July 18-20, Box 4, Correspondence 1978-1981, Victor Cicansky Fonds, 2005-53 University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Letter April 26, 1978 from Cicansky to Walter Safinuk, Box 4, Correspondence 1978-1981, Victor Cicansky Fonds, 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[13] Kerr, 2004, 7.
[14] Ibid,23; Robert Enright, "Victor Cicansky: 'of clay and Craven I sing," An Interview by Robert Enright, *Arts Manitoba,* (Summer, 1983), 5; "Victor Cicansky-Saskatchewan Arts Board Collection," *Covered Jar,* stoneware, 40.6 x 19.0 x 18.0 cm, 1967, C67.2, email from Belinda Harrow to the author, 8 July 2013.
[15] Kerr, 2004, 24-25; Sandra Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," in *Regina Clay: Worlds in the Making,* ed. Timothy Long, (Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2005), 15.
[16] Kerr, 2004, 24-25, 27.

the addition of fibreglass to clay.[17] Cicansky's interest in these innovative approaches to ceramic and sculpture placed him on the margins of the university ceramic art scene dominated by modernist and functional concerns, [18] but in 1967 he found his ceramic "home." While attending a summer course at the Haystack Mountain School of Art in Maine, Cicansky was introduced to the leader of the ceramic Funk movement in California, Robert Arneson, who encouraged him to enroll in the MFA program at the University of California, Davis. At Davis he was also greatly influenced by faculty member, Funk painter and assemblage sculptor Roy De Forest.[19] Cicansky was particularly impressed by De Forest's approach: "we all come equipped with tools – our thoughts and our feelings; academic solutions are dry solutions; and the prevailing art theories of the period [are] pompous, boring and oppressive of individual ideas."[20] Through contact with the Davis faculty, Cicansky developed his own idiosyncratic vocabulary of figurative representation, ceramic technical expertise, and art marketing skills.

The Davis philosophy that encouraged students to "work from [their] own experience, whatever that experience,"[21] resonated with Cicansky who came from a working class immigrant background, physically, economically and socially outside the dominant middle class Anglo-Saxon Regina culture.[22] He revelled in this supportive environment declaring: "Never in the history of art, and of sculpture in particular, was there so much choice available to a searching artist."[23] At Davis he turned to dilapidated buildings as an inspiration and began to include architectural elements in his miniature tableaux. After completing his MFA in 1970 Cicansky returned to Regina with this new toolbox of ceramic concepts, set up his own studio, and started teaching at the University of Regina. His interest in agronomy, memories of his childhood in Regina's "Garlic Flats," an area settled by Eastern European immigrants and his travels around Saskatchewan precipitated a shift in the subject matter of his sculptures to miniature scenes of

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[17] Sandra Alfoldy, "Setting the Stage for Regina Clay," in Long, 2005, 14.
[18] Ibid, 13; Alan Kellogg, "Victor's Garden of Veggie Delights; Regina sculptor's work takes root in the imagination," *Edmonton Journal,* 23 May 1998, C1.
[19] Faye Hutchinson, "Biographical Sketch, Victor Cicansky 91-68, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections;" Sylvia Brown, "San Francisco: Roy de Forest at the San Francisco Museum," *Art in America*, (Sept., Oct., 1974): 116. See also Hilton Kramer, "De Forest Amuses With His Fantasy Art," *New York Times,* Saturday, March 29, 1975, 10.
[20] Jack Anderson, "A look at trends that shaped Regina art," *Leader Post,* 17 Feb. 2000, D1
[21] Enright, 1983, 5.
[22] Kerr, 2004, 18.
[23] Victor Cicansky, "In Victor's own words," 2001-26 Victor Cicansky, 2001, Revised May 2009, Elizabeth Seitz, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections,

rural prairie life. *Singing the Joys of the Agrarian Society* addressed the importance of the outhouse, and the *Prairie Gamblers* depicted card players in a small town café. The sculptures of this period could be enigmatically understood as mocking, celebrating, and/or gently critiquing Saskatchewan rural and semi-rural life. In these scenes, carefully wrought examples of material culture surround the people because Cicansky felt, "all those little kinds of objects …are part of one's life."[24] The brightly glazed, low-fired miniature polychrome tableaux were replete with modelled and painted details, demanding close examination from all angles, enticing their audience to discover a surprising and intriguing world. Historically, as one-offs, they call to mind eighteenth-century monochromatic salt-glazed pew figures, but in terms of social commentary, they follow in the tradition of brightly coloured, low-fired, moulded, Staffordshire miniatures from the eighteenth and nineteenth century that depicted rural English life.[25] Like Cicansky's works, these small tableaux designed for mantelpieces humorously critiqued the social conditions of their times engaging with issues such as alcohol consumption, gender roles, and country entertainments.[26] In both Cicansky's and the historical Staffordshire works, architectural details, objects, body postures, and clothing all contribute to the nuanced social narratives, details also possessed on a larger scale by the *Old Working Class*.

Like the "political" Staffordshire ceramic sculpture, Funk sculpture was placed on discursive margins. Both of Cicansky's teachers, Arneson and De Forest, worked outside the mainstreams of New York modernist art and functional pottery. They based their subject matter on their immediate geographical and social surroundings, turning to common objects of material culture as subject matter, making their work "regional." [27] In the first exhibition catalogue addressing Funk Art, 1967, curator Peter Selz wrote that while its "historical or critical importance" had not yet been established, it was still "appropriate to document its occurrence."[28] The catalogue made a case to legitimize Funk within twentieth-century art movements by linking

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[24] Enright, 1983, 6.
[25] *Figure group*, c1750, Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum number, C.6-1975, salt-glazed stoneware, hand-modelled.
[26] For specific examples see: *Tee-total* c1835, Victoria and Albert Museum, C.2-2002, moulded lead-glazed earthenware painted with enamels; *Ale Bench,* c1835, Victoria and Albert Museum, C.3-2002, moulded lead-glazed earthenware painted with enamels; *Conquer or Die,* c1830, Victoria and Albert Museum, C.131-2003, moulded lead-glazed earthenware painted with enamels; *Polito's Menagerie,* c.1830, Victoria and Albert Museum, C.128-2003, moulded lead-glazed earthenware painted with enamels.
[27] Artists who worked outside the mainstream New York modernist scene were considered regional in the 1970s. Roberta Smith, "Post-Minimal to the Max," *New York Times,* Art and Design Section, 10 Feb. 2010, 2.
[28] Peter Selz, *Funk,* (University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley: Berkeley California, 1967), 2.

it to Surrealism, Dadaism, and Pop Art.[29] While Arneson, De Forest, and their colleagues established successful careers through subsequent exhibitions at New York commercial galleries and The Whitney Museum of American Art, the terms "provincial" and "regional" stuck to this body of work. De Forest's work was characterized in 1980 as "a 60's provincial retort to the Pristine Province of Manhattan Modernism."[30] The same provincial label was pejoratively pinned to Arneson's work. In 1982, a New York critic reviewing a Whitney show of California ceramic sculptors challenged the impact and legitimacy of the California Ceramic Funk Movement. His remarks are worth quoting.

> Around and about the work of this movement there has long hovered a question that critics are usually reluctant to air in public - it seems so snobbish and undemocratic even to consider it - but one that is nonetheless present in the minds of many people who come into contact with the work itself. It is the question of provincialism - the question, in other words, of whether this art represents a merely local and regional taste, tethered to the conditions of the life and culture that have produced it, or something more significant than that, something that artists elsewhere might usefully learn from and build upon. It is a question made more acute, of course, by the fact that ceramic art - in this country at least - has traditionally been associated with regional styles and a provincial ethos.

The critic continued, singling out Arneson's work as:

> the sensibility of a provincial whose outlook has been decisively shaped by the art department gags of the university campus…. We are left brooding about the thinness and the spiritual impoverishment of the cultural life that has sustained this movement. We are left, in short, with some dark thoughts about the fate of high art in the California sun.[31]

Influential members of New York "high art" circles were not impressed with California Funk and dismissive of ceramics as not being international enough in scope, a contention easily refuted with some knowledge of American ceramic history. Ironically this opposition actually served to vindicate the ideology of the Funk movement that relied heavily upon narrative, puns, irony, and personal iconography, drawing strength from so-called regional, stylistic, and even material marginality to counter the East Coast hegemony. Cicansky learned the power and effectiveness of this subversive vocabulary to challenge entrenched political, social, and artistic hierarchies. But in doing so, as we shall see, he too was vulnerable to the same critiques of

[29] Peter Selz, "Notes on Funk," in *Funk,* 1967, 3-6.
[30] Carrie Rickey, "Midtown," *Village Voice*, (March 3, 1980): 78.
[31] Hilton Kramer, Ceramic Sculpture and the Taste of California, *New York Times,* Dec. 20, 1981.

regionalism and provincialism, only mitigated, as I argue, by the emerging power of the discourse of multiculturalism.

Figure 91: *Breast Trophy*, Robert Arneson, 1964

Figure 92: *Untitled,* 1965, Roy DeForest

Funk and clay are closely associated through common metaphorical connections with the body. A writer recently pointed out "[e]ven the term "Funk" came fully loaded, stemming from dictionary definitions meaning body odor, the smell of sexual intercourse, and something

commonly regarded as coarse or indecent."[32] Arneson himself maintained the transgressive power of clay as material, which he exploited in his sculptures, was tied to its evocation of bodily fluids and excretions, as well as being just messy and dirty.[33] The association between Funk and clay reinforced the disturbing power of the Funk objects' messages, which often did address bodily functions. An attempt was made by American ceramic critics to contain these concerns to California, perhaps to emphasize the uniqueness of this made-in-America movement, or to restrain and diminish its subversive power. American ceramic historian, Garth Clark, emphasized the Funk movement in California "grew very much out of regional energies and concerns…[and] was never transplanted outside the Bay Area where those who succeeded in applying the style all lived."[34] In a sense he corroborates the *New York Times* critic who claimed that despite the appearance of Funk ceramics in Amsterdam or Canberra, neither considered a centre of influence in the international art world, California ceramic Funk could not be considered influential. Craft theorist Glenn Adamson was even more emphatic about the limits of California ceramic Funk noting as it spread beyond its cultural and geographic boundaries, "it lost in quality what it gained in followers, gradually petering out into a derivative confection of highly colored glazes, finicky workmanship, and lame visual puns."[35] In Saskatchewan the heyday of the Regina Clay Movement involving ceramicists influenced by Davis ceramics had passed by the late 1970s, but not before it contributed to a new way of working with clay, and not before it lay the foundations for the acceptance of public work derived from some of its foundational principles. The first monumental public works that celebrated this history were Cicansky's *The Old Working Class* and *The New Working Class.*[36]

Cicansky's sculptural approach to clay, vindicated by this education, was developed as an alternative to the "serious work" he had previously been exposed to in New York, Toronto, and Regina: he realized it was possible to "have fun" with what he was doing. His humorous, and often pointed, prairie tableaux of the 1970s featuring people in architectural prairie settings grew from the works of Davis staff and students, where he encountered cars, vegetables, and crudely-

[32] Scott A, Shields, "California Funk," *Ceramics Monthly* 56, no. 9 (April, 2008): 40.
[33] Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft.* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 146-7.
[34] Garth Clark, *American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present,* (London: Booth-Clibborn, 1987), 124.
[35] Adamson, 2007, 148.
[36] Cicansky's ceramic relief mural, *Regina: My World,* 1978, for the Co-operative Life Insurance Company, Regina also made reference to this movement.

made, brightly-coloured figurines as clay sculpture.[37] He was introduced to Arneson's "Alice Street" series that included three-dimensional table sculptures as well as a mural based on his suburban home, drawing upon the banal associations of Middle America's bungalow culture. These model homes, displayed on tables and constructed as murals, were formed with a low-fired white clay and painted with bright commercial glazes associated with hobby ceramicists.[38] In themselves, the kind of clay and glazes used by Arneson challenged the ceramic world's fascination with, and privileging of, high-fired porcelain and stoneware and artist-formulated and artist-mixed reduction glazes. Among these was *Alice House Wall,* 1967, 149.9 x 236.2 x 38.7 cm., a mural composed of thirty-nine irregularly shaped "bricks," slab built boxes ranging in size up to that of a concrete block, open on one side, each glazed as a separate colour block that fit together like a child's jigsaw puzzle.[39] The construction techniques of this mural are similar to those found in *The Old Working Class*. Another production included three-dimensional table models of the Alice Street House, resembling an architect's model, but again coloured with bright low-fired "hobby" glazes. These models culminated in a much larger version of the house again constructed and cut into irregular forms that followed the design of the component parts of the model, and took into consideration the size of the loading space in the kiln. In 1971 shortly after Cicansky had returned to Regina, Arneson created *Smorgibob, The Cook,*[40] a sculpture of a table prepared for a banquet and laden with food, including a self-portrait of Arneson as the cook at the end, ready to serve the feast. This deep perspective corner piece within a limited space is constructed on an angle that emphasizes foreshortening so an effect emerges of a large and long table.[41] The theme of feasting, expressed through the use of a life-size figure and food and the deep perspective in a shallow space suggest connections with Cicansky's *The Old Working Class,* as well as *The New Working Class*.

[37] Australian Margaret Dodd sculpted Volkswagen Beetles, Peter Vandenberge sculpted vegetables and Arneson and Roy De Forest created an exhibition of collaborative crudely-made figurines. Shields, 2008, 38-41.
[38] Neal Benezra, *Robert Arneson: A Retrospective,* (Des Moines, Iowa: Des Moines Art Center, 1986), 26.
[39] Museum of Arts and Design, Conservation of Robert Arneson's "Alice House Wall," 1967, accessed 9 May 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XO1OQFGX5vw.
[40] *Smorgibob the Cook,* Robert Arneson, white earthenware with glaze, vinyl table cloth, wood table, 73in. x 66 in. x 53 in., corner piece, purchase 1972, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
[41] Benezra, 1986, 30-31.

Figure 93: *Alice House* wall, Robert Arneson, 1967

Figure 94: *Smorgibob The Cook*, Robert Arneson, 1971

Figure 95: *Prairie Waterworks*, Victor Cicansky, 1973

In Saskatchewan Cicansky specialized in prairie "tableaux" that mocked or questioned prevailing social values. Words such as "whimsy" and "amusing" described them in a *Globe and Mail* review of a touring group exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and in a *Craft Horizons* review of a gallery exhibition.[42] Within critical circles, Cicansky's ceramics remained closely associated with folk art and the amateur, and while this formed part of his social critique such an association deeply affected the reading of both *The Old Working Class* and *The New Working Class*. In 1979 an article on the ceramic sculptures of four of the Regina ceramicists, Cicansky, Fafard, Thauberger and Yuristy, appeared in an *Artscanada* special edition on the interface of fine and folk art. Three years later, an *Arts West* essay discussed both Fafard's and Cicansky's work in terms of their Davis influences, but then contextualized them within very different frameworks: Fafard's within early twentieth-century modernism, accompanied by images of his

[42] "West Touched with Whimsy," *Globe and Mail*, March 30, 1973, 12; Mikhail Zakin, "New York/Clay," *Craft Horizons* 35, (Dec. 1975): 53.

painted sculptures of Picasso and Cézanne; and Cicansky's within folk art and agrarian concerns accompanied by an unglazed sculpture of his grandmother represented as a harvester. These texts simultaneously confronted and illustrated entrenched hierarchies and divisions in the culture worlds that vacillated between embracing change and reaffirming differences. At one level, craft and folk still both represented otherness to fine art, and Cicansky's Sturdy-Stone murals were the voice of "the other."

Working Out *The Old Working Class*

The Old Working Class murals were a serious matter for Cicansky who felt strongly about recognizing in public art what had been ignored, the experience of the early-twentieth century pioneer immigrants, many who eventually settled in the east end of Regina. His Sturdy-Stone Centre proposal, "Prairie Settlers of Saskatchewan and Farming Scenes," was contracted to be executed in "Fired clay some coloured glaze."[43] Five years later Cicansky described the settlers as "creative," "survivors," and "adventurers," he had met as a boy after they had spent the first few years living in holes in the ground before building respectable houses and making "quite an interesting life for themselves."[44] The murals were made of iron-rich earthenware cone 03 (1100°c) clay from Medicine Hat Alberta, prairie clay to build sculptures of prairie people who had lived in clay sod houses and who negotiated the clay soils for agricultural survival. He was accustomed to working with lower-fired clays from his tableaux, and as they were interior murals, water impermeability was not a concern. They were created in Cicansky's spacious rural studio in Craven in the Qu'Appelle Valley.[45] Six drawings for the murals elaborate their specific subject matter, collective memories of the rural immigrant: "They Settled - Built Homes," Barn," " Table," " Animals," "Vegetables," and "The West Held the Promise of an Earthly Paradise."[46] Cicansky's notes indicate he associated these collective memories of "going west", "settling the west" and "farming the west" with a series of possible questions they might elicit in his audience

[43] Letter from D.Y. Townsend to Ceramsky Art Works Limited, July 18, 1977, Box 1/1 Correspondence 77-83, 1980-1981, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[44] Enright, 1983, 8.
[45] "Victor Cicansky," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980, 14.
[46] Oversize Sketches, File 1 Correspondence 1977-83, Victor Cicansky Fonds, 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

regarding childhood memories of rural living.[47] They were designed to evoke personal memories and invite connections to imagined lived experiences.

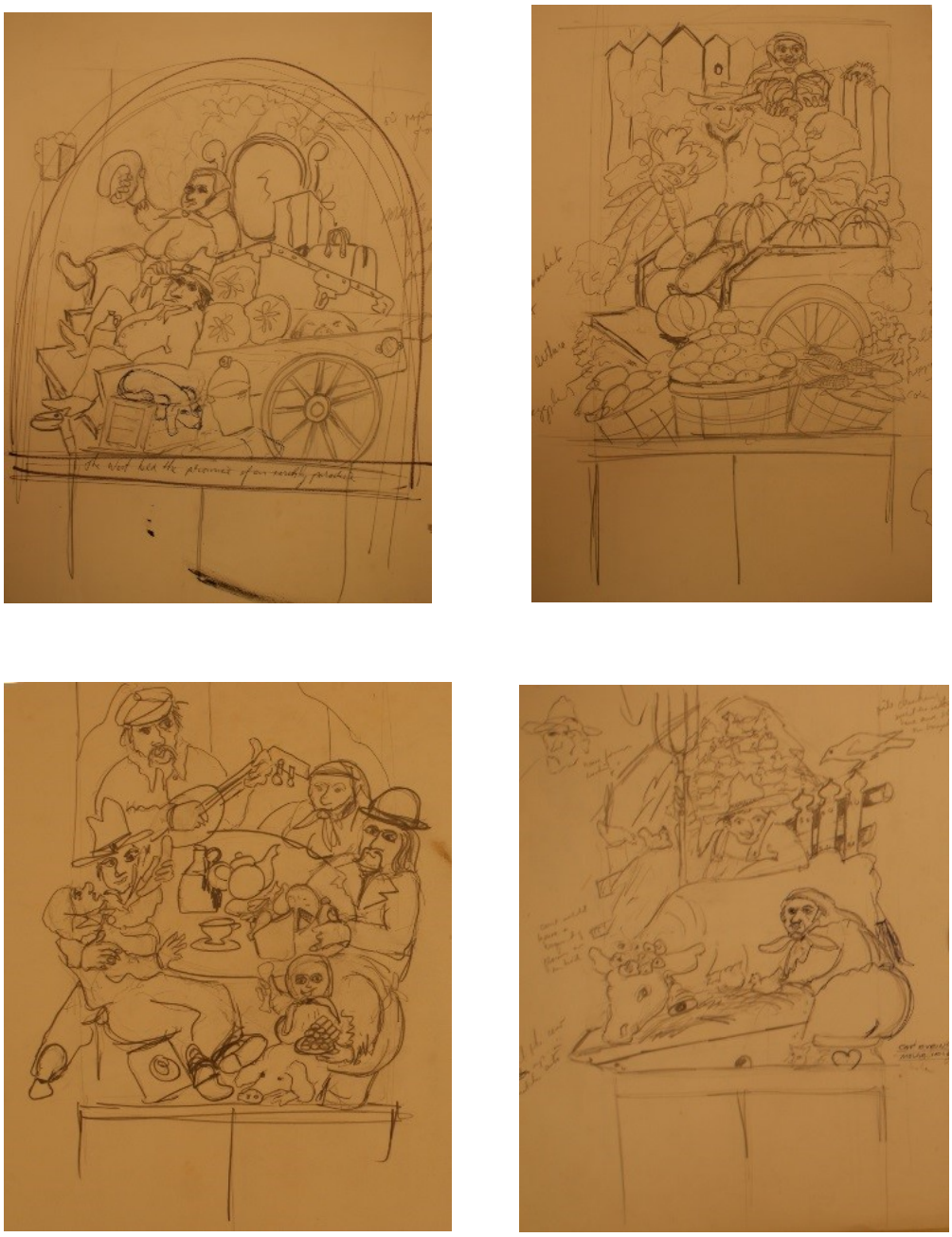

Figure 96: Details of Sketches for *The Old Working Class*, #1-#4, 1976

[47] Oversize Sketches, File 1, The Old Working Class-1977, sketches #1 and #4, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

Cicansky described developing these from his series of sketches. The building process entailed "[e]ach section was built as an independent sculptural form and stacked up against and alongside other sections. Each mural seemed to grow organically with every new addition."[48] The theme of the five murals and the development of each element went through several incarnations as sketches that, as the process wore on, became more unified in form with fewer details.[49] From these Cicansky devised maquettes that served to guide the larger final mural design and construction. He described this sculptural format as "not so much rectangular as it is a series of piled up forms," reflecting his working method in the drawings.[50]

Figure 97: Victor Cicansky working in his Craven Sask. studio on *The Old Working Class,* c1976

The Sturdy-Stone Centre mural sections are formed like sculptural bricks that all fit together, a technique similar to the one used by Arneson in his *Alice House Wall*. The sections of

[48] Victor Cicansky email to the author 1 Nov. 2008.
[49] Three of the maquettes that closely resemble Cicansky's sketches in the University of Regina archives are to be found in the lobby of the provincial building, W.G. Davies Building, 110 Ominica St. Moose Jaw Saskatchewan.
[50] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008. This working process is clear from his early sketches. File 1 Oversize Sketches The Old Working Class-1977, sketches #1-#4, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

Alice House Wall are constructed like a child's colour coded jig-saw puzzle that emphasizes each component part;[51] in *The New Working Class* shapes are more complex and nestle inside one another so they appear, not as an assemblage of parts, but as one monumental mural where the closely-fitting sections conceal the abutting surfaces within the design of the forms. These were formed by combining slabs with other modeling techniques that Cicansky invented for the occasion,[52] as confidence and improvisation with sculptural clay methods was crucial for the successful realization of this project. The hollow forms had to be supported from the interior and exterior as they dried to prevent collapsing, possibly with newspaper as Cicansky's friend, Joe Fafard, had used for his hollow cow sculptures.[53] Working with slabs entailed rolling the clay to the desired thickness, and then, at the right dryness, where the slab would be still flexible enough to hold its form, but not collapse or tear when moving it, maneuver it to form the basic sculptural form. As it dried the shape could be slightly modified and clay added or subtracted as required for the final result. Other sculptural techniques, such as working from a solid mass and hollowing them out afterwards, may have been used for objects such as the heads which show a great deal of plastic manipulation, difficult to achieve with a slab construction that lends itself more to less detailed abstracted shapes. Because of the low viewing position of the audience, the background forms and figures were made in higher relief so they projected forward, counterbalancing the low perspective.[54] The division into sculptural sections would have been calculated to take into consideration a number of variables: the overall design of the mural, uniform drying and firing, the size of Cicansky's kiln, and their final weight for installation.

A challenge in making these complex sculptures was the variation in shrinkage because of different shapes and thickness and the need for all parts to fit closely together when fired. The complexity of the sculptures meant that breakage would be a major setback, as the reproduction of a section after the whole mural had been fired was very difficult to replicate and ensure a tight fit with its surrounding pieces. Large sculptural forms meant these sections were quite heavy, and therefore secure attachment accommodations had to be made, especially as these murals were above the heads of people who had to pass under them. Because of this weight, Cicansky

[51] Museum of Arts and Design, "Conservation of Robert Arneson's "Alice House Wall, 1967."
[52] "Victor Cicansky," in *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980, 14.
[53] Joe Fafard, *I Don't Have to Work That Big,* Michael McKennirey (NFB, 1973), DVD.
[54] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Victor Cicansky, 1" Box 5 2005-53, 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina and Special Collections.

included holes in the sections to enable Jake Ketler to attach them securely to the wall with not only adhesives, but also anchor bolts of steel rods,[55] a technique related to the mounting practices used in architectural terra cotta.[56] Cicansky was the only muralist to take this into consideration and attributes this to his construction knowledge.[57] Each of these holes was then plugged with fired clay disguised for example as flowers, fence knots, or food. The scale of this project required someone who had experience, technical knowledge, time, the will to work through multiple problems, financial resources to sustain himself through the improvisation and problem-solving, and a real sense of adventure. Like the pioneers in his murals, Cicansky was a Canadian clay sculptor pioneer.

Figure 98: Maquettes for *The Old Working Class,* 1977

There to Work

Cicansky wrote of *The Old Working Class*: "The site, the main elevator lobby of the building, demanded something interactive. My solution was to create full figures staring down at

[55] Jake Ketler interviewed by the author, 26 May 2011; Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Installation, 3, " Box 5 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina and Special Collections.
[56] Gary F. Kurutz, *Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding, McBean,* (Sausilito California: Windgate Press, 1989), 92,103; David Hamilton, *The Thames and Hudson Manual of Architectural Ceramics,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 170.
[57] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Victor Cicansky 1, " Box 5 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina and Special Collections. Victor Cicansky interviewed by the author 5 Sept. 2013.

people staring up."[58] All the figures, which span three generations, engage with each other and the audience. The fifteen men, women, and children depicted in these works look across the hall at us, down upon us, and at each other. But "look" is really too neutral a term as they actually glare, challenge, examine, startle, confront, and entice each other and us. Their ability to connect is an important function of the murals. In Florence, Cicansky had experienced the effect elicited by della Robbia figurative sculptures extending out from the surface of a wall high above the viewer, gazing down. At sites such as the Certosa dell Galluzzo monastery in Florence classical and religious figures watch over the users of the space,[59] reminding them of Roman values and Christian ecclesiastical history, and by inference recalling certain ideal cultural and social standards. Cicansky's farming figures are not from the classical or religious élite, but they do gaze down upon us reminding us of pioneering values.

The people, places, and things in the mural compel our attention and the intriguing faces with expressive and impressive features, are impossible to ignore. Most are weathered, wrinkled, strained and fleshy: faces of those who have lived hard, seen and felt much and struggled to survive. Portrayed against rough-cut plank fences, they are surrounded with objects and food, and in all but one of the murals, with animals and birds. In four of the murals various fruits of the harvest overflow their bags, pots, cans and bowls: grains, peas, beans, corn, squash, pumpkins, leeks, turnips, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage and berries abound. In one mural a pig and duck are cradled in the arms of the man and woman, and in another a cow leans affectionately on the back of a woman bent over her box of corn while a pig snuffles at more cobs. In two other murals we are presented with the trussed-up cattle and pig heads after slaughter and strings of sausages and blocks of lard, as well as more benign images of triangles of homemade cheese cut from a large wheel. Ducks and rabbits roam around; owls and a raven perch on the fences; a cat lunges at a mouse and another lurks behind a wall; dogs peer over boxes and under tables, scramble over a log and even tip over a bowl to steal a T-bone steak. In one mural a bag of household goods, baskets, crates and cans, and a steamer trunk with a lock infer the journey to a new homestead. The presence of rocks and logs in four murals remind us of the labour required

[58] Cicansky, Nov. 1 2008; Cicansky also stated: "It was the work which drew them then and now, serves to hold them together. It doesn't matter so much where you come from, what is important is what you do." Cicansky quoted in Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Victor Cicansky 1, " Box 5 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina and Special Collections.
[59] Bettina Röhrig , "Certosa Dell Galluzzo," *The Museums of Florence,* 4 Feb. 2013, http://www.museumsinflorence.com/musei/certosa_del_Galluzzo.html.

to clear land and prepare it for farming, while in the remaining mural we are entertained by the feast that is the reward. In this mural three women and two men, identifiable by clothing and specific facial features as characters from the other murals, sit around a cloth-draped table on which is displayed a variety of dishes. The food on the table reflects the importance of basic food that brings people from different cultures together: a large garlic sausage, challah bread, cabbage rolls, boiled wheat, and a jug of liquor, all recognizable by those who have ever experienced farm life on the prairies. A cross on the wall casts a blessing over the meal, reflecting the importance of their Christian faith, also represented in the adjacent mural by a fence distinctively decorated with the onion pattern of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Cicansky who grew up in Regina was well aware the city was the location of the first organized parish of Romanian Orthodox Church in North America. Founded in 1902 by the Romanian immigrant community who had left and lostt everything upon leaving home, it served to rally them when they discovered in their new land "they were unwelcome, undervalued, underpaid and disrespected in a British-dominated, English-speaking culture."[60] The buxom woman at the back of the scene, whose breasts lie at the centre of the composition and who is the largest of the figures, gives an affectionate kiss to the man on her left, and this loving action forms the focus of the mural. The murals mesh the emotional and physical nourishment of people and the land.

The material culture of the lives of these people is as important to the meaning of the ceramic murals as the figures themselves, and this simple fact is brought home through the monochromatic terra cotta clay colour that levels all elements of the composition as coming from and belonging to the earth. The people, fauna, and flora all emerge from the clay earth and fashion the earth. The harvest and consumption of food, the cross-species bonds that develop within this small farm paradigm, and the relationships among people that drive this economy paradoxically confront us in this modernist building dedicated to the provincial bureaucracy. They are a continual reminder of the rich and revered agricultural history of the province and its settlers and its contribution to modern Saskatchewan.

[60] St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox Church, "Home," and "Historical Background," accessed 15 March 2011, http://www.st-nicholas.ca/3201.html.

Figure 99a: *The Old Working Class*

Figure 99b: *The Old Working Class*
Above the elevators on north wall

Figure 99c: *The Old Working Class*

Figure 99d: *The Old Working Class*

Figure 99e: *The Old Working Class*
Above the elevators on south wall

The murals are full of details that allow us to clearly identify all the elements of the material culture of the "old working class," details that suggest we reflect on its' making. Cicansky wrote of them:

> The people who lived in the Garlic Flats were working class people who lived by the sweat of their labours. Necessity and exuberant inventiveness taught them how to adapt to a new country and culture. They planted huge gardens, harvested, canned and stored vegetables for the winter months. They had a passion for living, loved good food, bread and wine…We were not rich but we made big fires in small ovens.[61]

The labour required of these settlers included moving and piling every rock so the land could be cultivated. In the murals each rock and log is singular, with a unique form and weathered surface, inviting us to imaginatively engage with their shape, texture, and weight. Even the cornhusks and corn kernels are individualized, as well as the flowering end of every tomato and the eyes of each potato. The wrinkled cabbage texture tells us which variety it is, and the shapes of the zucchinis hint at their growing conditions. Wooden planks with their specific grain patterns, nail holes, and knots, as well as the logs beneath the feet of the figures remind us of the effort of building; split cedar baskets and barrels, basket-weave containers and thickly coiled rope suggest traditional textile techniques handed down over generations; the texture of the burlap bags make us aware of weaving and the roughness we feel when handling them; metal pots with conspicuously riveted handles recall the practice of local repairs by tinkers. Textured clothing, disposition of buttons and trim, wrinkle patterns of shirts, and plain serviceable boots indicate the functionality of the costumes. And yet there are indications of personal taste such as the earrings and flowered hat worn by the middle-aged woman, headscarves, and the specially creased rims of the men's hats. We are drawn to the murals because of the work of hands.

The large tablecloth that drapes over the sides of the table in gentle folds to the floor signals a purposely-laid table for a special occasion. Corked ceramic jugs of one to five gallon sizes, always with cups available, remind us of the importance of social drinking. These containers could well have originated at one of the Medicine Hat potteries that relied upon East End Saskatchewan for its stoneware clay and supplied stoneware jugs to the prairie region in the early twentieth century.[62] This geographic connection completes the referential circle as the clay

[61] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.
[62] Marylu Antonelli and Jack Forbes, *Pottery in Alberta: The Long Tradition*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1978), 9, 33 43, 76, 84.

for the murals had also come from Medicine Hat and likely was at least partially comprised of Saskatchewan clay. These murals serve as documents of the rural material culture, much as paintings and photographs of former times and places have documented the lives and livelihoods of other people. Throughout this series of five murals the viewer is reminded of abundance that arises from the careful husbandry and diligent labour of those who work the land. The skill, determination, concentration, sense of adventure, and self-confidence required to sustain oneself, a family, and a community is communicated through Cicansky's conscientiously modelled *The Old Working Class.*

The flora, fauna and material culture in the murals highlight the transformative work of this community of people, but their carefully individualized faces and hands emphasize their bodies as agents of labour and the transformations of their bodies through the power of work. Their vigorous hands are devotedly sculpted showing sinews, veins, muscles and loose skin, and are as visually prominent as are their expressive faces. The older people are portrayed with deeply lined features including jowls, warts and even wrinkles, and while expressions of benevolence and tenderness are common, suspicion and confrontation are also evident. Such detail illustrates how emotions and labour are interconnected and imprinted on the bodies of the characters. By contrasting three generations that comprise an adolescent boy and girl, a middle-aged couple, and four older women and men, Cicansky illustrates this gradual acquisition of character through accumulated life experiences. We remark on the hopeful and bright gaze of the curly-haired, slim young woman surveying the scene above the fence and on the boy accompanied by his loyal dogs looking down at us. Unlike the other figures in these two compositions, their hands and arms are not shown, and they seem slightly removed from this world of intense farming labour. These are the children and grandchildren who were linked to two worlds; that of their immigrant families and culture imported from Europe and the dominant, but slowly shifting, Anglo-Saxon culture. The two generations of adults carry the history of their labour on their bodies, in the curved backs, sinewy hands and necks, and fleshy and wrinkled faces. Cicansky is clear he did not want this to be a nostalgic work celebrating an unrealistic bucolic rural life. He explained: "Much of what I experienced was beautiful and inspiring and made me who I am today. And some of what I saw was pretty ugly. It wasn't my intention to romanticize the past."[63]

[63] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.

Ethnic or cultural markers also identify the figures represented in *The Old Working Class*. Eli Mandel, when discussing these murals in *Artscanada* in 1979, interpreted the woman with the flower in her hat as a "genteel Scotswoman," and the target of the "Ukrainian lady" who was "waving a garlic sausage in [her] face."[64] Mandel's ethnic distinction is not insignificant. The Eastern European origins of the older women are signalled by their specific head scarves, known in North America as a babushka after the Russian word designating an elderly Russian woman.[65] In her study of the representation of Eastern European womanhood in Elizabeth Wyn Wood's 1935 bust, *The Immigrant,* Allyson Adley points out in Europe the headscarf was donned upon marriage, representing the woman's new civil status, with the particular knotting pattern specific to her village of origin. While the knot literally tied her to her birthplace, the headshawl carried important political weight: for the Ukrainian nationalist, it signified the adherence to traditional women's values, but for the Canadian integrationist it marked resistance to integration. As Adley relates, abandoning the headshawl and purchasing a department-store hat was often the step an immigrant woman took towards conforming to what was expected by the dominant Anglo-Saxon majority, a refusal of her ethnic identity and ethnic solidarity.[66] Thus the figure Mandel identifies as a "genteel Scotswoman" could represent just that, the Anglo-Saxon woman from the majority culture working to reform the Eastern European immigrant women in her image, or the immigrant woman who had untied her knot of origin to conform to the majority's expectations.[67] The cultural mosaic had its limits.

Cicansky's Romanian ancestry has been consistently mentioned in texts written about his work from the late 1970s to the present. Evidently Cicansky's ethnic identity was and is important to the maker and the work's audience. The fact that his father originated in a small village in Romania and his mother was a Romanian-Canadian, born in Montreal, cannot be ignored.[68] The prominence of the garlic sausage, brandished in the air in pride and defiance is a pointed allusion to an important ethnic marker, a target for the prejudice experienced by many Eastern European immigrant families. This was clearly articulated in the early twentieth century

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[64] Mandel, 1979, 15.
[65] "babushka," *Oxford English Dictionary,* 3rd edition, 2011.
[66] Allyson Adley, "Re-Presenting Diasporic Difference: Images of Immigrant Women by Canadian Women Artists, 1912-1935," MA Thesis, Concordia University, 1999, 95-97.
[67] For an in-depth discussion of the strategies of integration exercised on Eastern European women by Anglo-Saxon women, see Adley, 1999.
[68] Kerr**,** 2004, 5, 27.

by George Exton Lloyd, Saskatchewan's Anglican bishop and outspoken critic of this influx of "mongrels," who opposed the "flood" of "dirty, ignorant, garlic-smelling continentals."[69] The brandished garlic sausage is not only a visual reference of difference, but also reminds us of a potent olfactory one as well.[70] Even the terra cotta itself has ethnic connections for those in the community. Cicansky explained:

> Each spring I would observe my Romanian grandmother, an Eastern Orthodox Christian, practice an ancient pagan (Dacian) ritual honoring the fertility of the earth. She would dig up a couple of grassy clods of earth, place them on her gate posts and plant three branches of budding pussy willows in the middle of each. Then she would bend down and pick up a handful of soil, squeeze it, smell it and rub it through her fingers and let it drift down. It was as if she was working some magic on this bare patch of earth. Bare, unglazed terra cotta clay seemed like the best medium to represent these people who were so close to the land. [71]

Such cultural markers in this building reinforce the insertion of people from non-Anglo Saxon cultural backgrounds into the province's cultural, economic and political life.[72]

While each mural is a self-contained unit, the figures sometimes appear to interact with one another suggesting an interconnected narrative with complex familial, community, and interpersonal relations. Cicansky described them as a "narrative series of collages of that time and place and the characters I encountered as a young boy."[73] People in his own Garlic Flats Regina community shared communal gardening on rented city land "because there was one large tract separated into lots" where during breaks they shared stories, wine, and a smoke.[74] As our attention is drawn from one body to another, are we looking at an unfolding story or at a series of snapshots taken over a period of time? The repetition of certain figures, identifiable through clothing and physical features, hints at candid photos of family and friends, and their lively expressions summon those moments where the formal frontal photographic pose has been

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[69] C.J. Kitzan, "The Fighting Bishop: George Exton Lloyd and the Immigration Debate," MA Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1996, 59-61 quoted in Bill Waiser, "The Myth of Multiculturalism in Early Saskatchewan," in *Perspectives of Saskatchewan,* ed. Jean M. Porter, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 66-67.
[70] For a discussion of the role smell can play in disrupting the anosmia of modern architecture see Jim Drobnick, "Volatile Architectures," in *Crime and Ornament: The Arts and Popular Culture in the Shadow of Adolf Loos,* eds. Bernie Miller and Melony Ward, (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2002), 262-82.
[71] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.
[72] For a discussion on multiculturalism, it shifting status, and the increased social power of immigrant groups in Saskatchewan in the 1970s see Chapter 1.
[73] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.
[74] Nancy Tousley, "Sexxy Veggies: Artist Victor Cicansky challenges censorship with ceramic sculptures of sensuous vegetables," *Calgary Herald,* 14 May 1995, E1.

disrupted by the chaos of life. Many of the figures familiarly touch one another suggesting they are close family or old friends who have spent many years working together. The murals take on the aspect of three-dimensional photos and the multiplicity of scenes embeds the subjects in a wider community action and interaction.

The setting for the narrative of *The Old Working Class* is clearly one attached to a domestic space. The figures are posed around a table within the home, or against homemade picket fences where it is not clear if we are looking at its exterior or interior. The fence sets up an important bounded space in terms of restricted access – it recognizes separateness. This ambivalent viewing position affects whether we understand the characters within a public or private space, where space is articulated "in connection to social relations."[75] If the figures are posed outside the fence, they may be part of a commercial economy, but if they are inside the fence, they are displaying their produce only for the viewer and their neighbours, who have been invited into this space. In either case economic survival is at stake. We encounter the group around the table as visitors intruding upon or asked to a private community or family function, but our status is uneasily ambivalent. If we examine the place of the murals, how they function within the social relations of the particular site of the Sturdy-Stone Centre we see they mediate between the dominant established Anglo-Saxon community and the Eastern European immigrant community, suggesting the viewer move from outside the fence to inside the space of those who are "not one of us."[76] *The Old Working Class* in its location in the Sturdy-Stone Centre confounds the separation between private, public, and political spaces suggesting the constant interplay among them, asserting their interconnectivity, and the complex web of social, legal, and cultural responsibilities and obligations within them.

The celebration of the East Regina immigrant subsistence gardeners in the *Old Working Class* was also constructed at a particular time, the mid 1970s, when many young people were moving out of urban areas to embrace rural living in small towns or farms. Reasons for these choices varied: nostalgia for an idealized way of life, environmental and ecological concerns, and financial or employment constraints and opportunities. Cicansky had moved to Craven, Saskatchewan in the Qu'Appelle Valley with his young family in 1974 at a time when other Regina artists were also embracing rural living, including his colleagues at the university, Russ

[75] Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between.*(London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 20.
[76] Ibid.

Yuristy who settled in Silton and Fafard who chose Pense. Subsistence living was one of the goals of Vic and Fran Cicansky who remodeled an old schoolhouse for their home and studio. Throughout this project Cicansky drew upon his memories of construction, farming and gardening practices in Regina's Garlic Flats and the skills he had acquired there while growing up.[77] Cicansky also served on the Craven village council for several terms, establishing himself as an active member of this rural community, moving from the outside into the inside of community relations.[78] Therefore in commemorating memories of the Garlic Flats he was also representing his own generation's ideals and life choices.[79] The mural was made in his Craven studio built with his own carpentry skills at a time when he was deeply involved with raising his own food, refining his gardening and husbandry skills, and belonging to a rural community with close neighbourly interaction. The multi-generational references in *The Old Working Class,* connects it to this "back to the land" movement as well as the people who gave the survival skills to Cicansky's generation.

Ethnicity and Style

Public figurative murals are usually created in a commemorative context, as is *The Old Working Class,* but its figurative style and subject matter do not fit our expectations. Shortly after the official opening of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, an *Arts West* review referred to this series as "marvellous gargoyles," and "grotesque caricatures," but also as "figures suggest(ing) oozing fecundity like pneumatic versions of Thomas Hart Benton;"[80] in the same year Mandel's *Artscanada* article characterized them as "Breughelesque distortions."[81] These remarks raise a great many questions as to their reception: How do these characterizations reflect and inflect views of the representation of individuals or a class of people within the Sturdy-Stone Centre? Are these figures generalized types or can they be considered portraiture and, if so, within what context? What are the ramifications of these designations in terms of how we evaluate the

[77] Kerr, 2004, 8, 9.
[78] Fay Hutchinson, "Biographical Sketch," January 12, 1968 ed. Shelley Sweeney, revised May 2009, Elizabeth Seitz, Victor Cicansky Fonds 91-68, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[79] In a 1974 newspaper article Cicansky's upcoming move to Craven was discussed within the context of a return to older methods of living on small farms where good workmanship was a priority, "like the pioneer days when people specialized in making things well." Victor Cicansky quoted in Reg Silvester, "Victor Cicansky builds clay shacks now," *Regina Leader-Post*, Dec. 1974. Box 6/16 Newspaper Articles etc. Victor Cicansky Fonds, 2005-53 University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[80] Miller, 79, 10.
[81] Mandel, 1979, 15.

murals? The associations made by the *Arts West* writer reveal perceptions of them as ill-shaped, distorted, and frightening, as well as difficult to contextualize within expectations of appropriate public art for a modern building. These connections should not be ignored as they indicate what a challenge these murals were for some in the contemporary Western Canadian art community and even in other parts of the country. The nuances of these labels impact on the how the murals work, what they do and how they do it, and the answers, I suggest, are woven within a complex mesh of interrelated issues involving multiculturalism coupled with stylistic, subject and material hierarchies in the art world.

Clay was important as a medium for Cicansky's sculpture as it enriched the social message of his works through its origins and its sensual qualities. When the Sturdy-Stone Centre was officially opened in 1979, Cicansky praised the earthiness, simplicity, and beauty of the material, connecting it to the subject of his murals.[82] Almost two decades later, in a 1997 letter to Diana Nemiroff, then contemporary curator at the National Gallery of Canada, he elaborated on his choice of clay:

> because it was friendly, honest and direct. It could be worked freely and easily and I was able to bring to it my knowledge of the cycle of nature, how things grow from the earth and how they decay. We all come from clay and return to clay. It has the stuff of life and death about it.[83]

The Old Working Class was the first monumental public articulation of Cicansky's philosophy that heretofore had been expressed in a smaller and quite different format. This was not just a departure for him; it was also not the usual material for figurative sculpture in Canada. Until the 1960s, stone had been the favoured material for public Canadian figurative sculpture in the twentieth century. Even the representations of anonymous hunters, fishermen, farmers, and teachers such as those in Eleanor Milne's 1960s frieze in the lobby of the Canadian Parliament were rendered heroic by the use of stone: the country was carved from stone through the tedious chipping away of a supposedly unformed wilderness. In this sense, although the sculptural material of the frieze was predetermined as part of the building, it was essential in contributing to the social message of this mural in this particular space. The interaction with clay suggests a gentler approach to moulding a province and a country, as the moist material is formed with the

[82] "Victor Cicansky," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980, 14.
[83] Victor Cicansky letter to Diana Nemiroff, Oct. 3, 1997, University of Regina, Box 3 File National Gallery of Canada, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-32, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

hands and then slowly dried. The trial by fire, however also has symbolic resonance, an event that irreversibly alters the character of the material, and following this analogy, the people and the country.

Figuration had been included in Canadian ceramic murals in the 1960s. Jordi Bonet of Montréal fashioned abstracted figures in his surrealist tympana, *Hommage à Gaudí,* above the foyer entrance doors to the Salle Wilfrid Pelletier theatre space in Place des Arts, Montréal. His expressive use of clay testified to its malleability and responsiveness to the urgent conscious and subconscious impulses of the maker, aligning it clearly within surrealism. In this case it highlighted the modernism and internationalism of Québec visual arts within an iconic cultural building. [84] A few years later, albeit in a more controlled fashion, Bonet went on to integrate faces into another surrealist monumental ceramic relief mural, *The End of Time*, 1966 for the foyer of the MacDonald Block of the Ontario Government Building, Toronto. Again in this modern, public, provincial government space, it contributed to the perception of an Ontario culture open to artistic innovation. Neither of Bonet's works, however, highlighted the human form nor hinted at personal likeness or a specific class, as did Cicansky's *The Old Working Class*. Another difference lay in their metaphorical approach to their medium: like Bonet, Cicansky appreciated the responsiveness of clay, but rather than aligning it with surrealist unconscious impulses, he connected it to manual labour and the transformation practices of husbandry and social interaction.

The subject matter and visual vocabulary Cicansky used in *The Old Working Class* is the antithesis of what was expected in monumental public figurative sculpture. Honouring neither war heroes nor politicians, the murals represent not only the working class, but an explicit ethnic group of recent immigrants, often disparaged by the dominant culture. Cicansky's public message about the importance of these people to the construction of Saskatchewan extended to all written texts in which he was quoted. In a 1983 *Craft Factor* article he declared: "For most of us today, those early days of settlement exist only in the imagination. The shape of that world, as represented in red-fired unglazed clay, is presented as a vision of the simplicity, the humour, the beauty and vitality of the early immigrants and their work."[85] Activities represented in the mural

[84] Susan Surette, "Jordi Bonet's *Hommage à Gaudì*: Sensual Matters," *Cahiers Métiers d'art/Craft Journal* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 56-64.
[85] Victor Cicansky quoted in Peggy Forde, "Sturdy-Stone Murals: Abstract to Concrete," *Craft Factor* 8, no.3 (Summer, 1983): 4. This vision is one closely associated as well with the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement as

were considered by many to be not only mundane, but also in particular circumstances, such as the field work done by women and the particular manner of private celebrations, as transgressing accepted genteel gender and cultural values of the dominant Anglo-Saxon population.[86] The rural working class subject matter was familiar to Cicansky and one he had explored in his previous small tableaux; however, the style in which he represented them shifted to accommodate this move from domestic and gallery spaces to public sculpture. The vernacular subject matter of these murals combined with their ubiquitous material and folk visual language is the source of their disruptive power expressed in the reviewers' uses of the terms, "caricature," "grotesque," and "gargoyles," and their search for art historical precedents in Thomas Hart Benton and Pieter Bruegel the Elder .[87] Through such connections to the vernacular *The Old Working Class* highlights crucial issues around processes of multiculturalism and integration.

The description of *The Old Working Class* as "marvellous gargoyles," and "grotesque caricatures," hints at ambivalence about their appropriateness for the site, and even suggests anxiety about their contribution towards the discursive space of this provincial government building. I examine this unease by questioning these descriptive terms, together with the equally important physical and formal attributes of the murals themselves. The unusually rendered figures (non-Classical and non-Romantic) projecting from the wall surface inspired the gargoyle reference. Originally functional, gargoyles drained water at the ends of gutters, but by the nineteenth century were more often decorative, primarily grotesque animal or human forms on finials. Currently the term "gargoyle" has now shifted in popular usage to include "any carved figure" mounted architecturally.[88] The terms gargoyle and grotesque are often juxtaposed or used synonymously. In fact grotesque in terms of gargoyles or architectural decoration is commonly used to designate "figures or designs characterized by comic distortion or exaggeration."[89] Literature contemporary with the Sturdy-Stone commissions looked to medieval Romanesque and Gothic grotesques and gargoyles as documents to illustrate the persistence of paganism

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expounded upon by William Morris in relation to honest labour and a simple rural life, and one that implicitly fuelled the 'back-to-the-land-movement of the 1970s. See William Morris, *News from nowhere; or, An epoch of rest; being some chapters from a utopian romance,* reprint of 1890 ed., (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966).

[86] For a discussion of negative Anglo-Saxon reaction to the Eastern European immigrant farm woman, see Adley, 1999, 80-88.

[87] Miller, 1979, 10; Mandel, 1979, 15.

[88] "gargoyle," Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2013; Walter Arnold, American stonecarver, quoted in Terry Murray, *Faces on Places,* (Toronto: Anansi Press, 2006), 8.

[89] "grotesque," OED Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, 2013.

couched within medieval Christianity.[90] Many examples of medieval and contemporary stone, human-like grotesques are found at Oxford University in England. Those attached to the Bodleian Library are now honoured because of their "rudeness, mischief and disobedience," in other words potential to subvert.[91] In Canada, Toronto journalist Christopher Hume uses the term "faces on places" rather than gargoyles, and situates them within a nationalistic agenda as "our continuing struggle to create a distinctly Canadian mythology, to develop a language, architectural and aesthetic, that enables us to tell our own stories."[92] Stone portraits or caricatures appeared in Toronto from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the 1930s. Some can even be identified as portraits as they explicitly depict the building's architect.[93] Educational institutions such as University of Toronto's Burwash Hall, Victoria College, and secondary schools Central Technical College, Harbord, Jarvis Collegiate, and Northern Secondary echoed the kinds and uses of gargoyles seen at Oxford. Many of the lively figures represent people in activities related to the buildings' uses such as clerics, scholars, students and sportsmen, actively engaged with the "tools" of their trades. In Canada, then, gargoyles are considered less associated with medieval paganism and mischief and more with nation building.

North American terra cotta gargoyles, sometimes called grotesques, appeared in early-twentieth century Beaux Arts architecture. Many of these projects were executed at various major American industrial terra cotta companies with designs from both in-house and independent sculptors. Created in white and polychrome terra cotta, and with textured glazes that resemble stone, examples of these grotesques are found in any North American city with architecture from this period.[94] From Confederation until as late as the Second World War, terra cotta grotesques and gargoyles were integrated into older architectural styles such as Gothic

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[90] Ronald Sheridan and Anne Ross, *Grotesques and Gargoyles: Paganism in the Medieval Church,* (Newton Abbott, Devon: David & Charles, 1975), 11-13.

[91] University of Oxford, "Unveiling of new gargoyles at Bodleian," 14 Sept. 2009, accessed 4 June 2013, http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2009/090914_1.html.

[92] Christopher Hume, foreword in Murray, 2006, ix.

[93] Ontario "heroes" and important historical figures are carved in stone on Ontario Government and Toronto municipal buildings. Example of an architect who had himself immortalized as part of his own building was William Thomas in the nineteenth century. See Murray, 2006, 48-65.

[94] Examples of grotesques include those on 81 Irving Place, New York City. Susan Tunick, *The Terra Cotta Skyline,* (New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 64. Extensive documentation has been undertaken by American terra cotta scholar and historian Susan Tunick who helped found the Friends of Terra Cotta Society. Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto have several examples of Beaux-Arts grotesques executed in white terra cotta from the early twentieth-century, but extensive documentation of these buildings, unlike the American examples, has not as yet been done. For a complete discussion of terra cotta in New York see Tunick, 1997.

Revival, Richardsonian Romanesque, Beaux-Arts, and modern Neo-classicism. While "marvellous gargoyles" were to be expected on such historical architecture, in 1979 their presence on a modernist, brutalist building was evidently surprising and a bit puzzling, difficult to comprehend out of architectural context and out of time. With this in mind it seems the *Arts West* writer understood these "marvellous gargoyles" of the Sturdy-Stone Centre as comical, subversive, puzzling and perhaps illegitimate nation-builders, contradictions worth investigating.

The description "grotesque caricatures" was also applied to *The Old Working Class* in the same article. How and why do these figures evoke this description, and how does this categorization, laid upon the other, "marvellous gargoyles," affect our understanding of their task as subversive nation builders? The symmetry between the grotesque and gargoyles and the grotesque and caricature, suggests an inquiry into the nature of the grotesque. As literary scholar Stella Butter points out, "a consensus regarding at least some key aspects of the grotesque has slowly emerged in contemporary aesthetic theory…[that] encompass a conflation of heterogeneous or disparate elements, an inversion of hierarchies and techniques of distortion."[95] She postulates a possible continuum for the grotesque including, "satire, the satiric grotesque, the absurd grotesque and the absurd."[96] These aspects of the grotesque in an artwork challenge the symbolic order and the mixture of the horror and absurdity of this often gives rise to "an ambivalent laughter fraught with anxiety," lending an interpretation of the work as humourful.[97] I argue that any association of *The Old Working Class* with the grotesque lies not only in the physical representation of the figures, but in the hybrid group formed by the history of public sculpture in Canada, government as purchaser, mural, the Sturdy-Stone Centre as location, and Saskatchewan immigration history.

At the most fundamental level, whether or not these representations of rural immigrants are actually grotesque must be considered, given the term describes "the aberration from the ideal form or from accepted convention, to create the misshapen, ugly, exaggerated, or even formless… [including] deliberate exaggerations or caricature."[98] However, their proportions are

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[95] Stella Butter, "The Grotesque as a Comic Strategy of Subversion: Mapping the Crisis of Masculinity in Patrick McGrath's *The Grotesque" Orbis Litterarum* 64, no. 4 (2007): 337.
[96] Fuß, P. 2001, Das Groteske: Ein Medium des kulturellen Wandels, Böhlau, Cologne et al., 146, quoted in Butter, 2007, 337.
[97] Butter, 2007, 338-39.
[98] Frances S. Connelly, "Introduction," in *Modern Art and the Grotesque,* ed. Frances S. Connelly, (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

not particularly overstated: body shapes, while not conforming to a heroic or athletic ideal, do fall within the so-called normal range of most people; dominant facial expressions are benign and while some have prominent moles these are not defining characteristics. Beyond their departure from an accepted stylistic convention for public sculpture there seem to be no visual cues in the figures themselves that would elicit ridicule or fear in the audience. In fact, the only link these figures could have with the grotesque as described here is their refusal of an ideal form tied to traditional public figurative sculpture in the romantic or neo-classical styles. If anything these bulky figures, discursively constructed as the working or lower classes, challenge us to consider our expectations of whose body and what kind of bodies are, can, and should be represented in public figurative art. The perception of grotesque here lies partially in this challenge.[99]

In her recent publication addressing the grotesque in the visual arts, art historian Frances S. Connelly points out its complex nature, suggesting it "provokes responses as contradictory as its meanings, fusing humor and horror, wit with transgression, repulsion with desire."[100] The power of the grotesque is not to explode foundations but to destabilize them by introducing alien structures and content, and an effective grotesque recognizes boundaries and focuses our attention on them.

> [T]he grotesque does not transgress as much as it ruptures boundaries, compromising them to the point where they admit the contradiction and ambiguity of a contrasting reality… making the contours of the familiar and 'normal' visible to us, even as it intermingles with the alien and unexpected. As such, the grotesque turns received ideas, normal expectations, and social and artistic conventions against themselves.[101]

In this sense, the grotesque and gargoyle and the grotesque and caricature function in the same manner, through subversion where the familiar and unfamiliar commingle in the work at the particular site. As the grotesque challenges social boundaries, it also questions art styles and forms alien to the Western canon, often interpreted as grotesque because they distort the rules of European representative art. [102] Such alienation from the canon has been recognized in folk art

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[99] Constance C. McPhee with contributions by Nadine M. Orenstein, "'Shoot Folly as It Flies': Humor on Paper," in *Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine*, by Constance C. McPhee and Nadine M. Orenstein, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 8.
[100] Frances S. Connelly, *The Grotesque in Western Art and Culture: The Image at Play*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.
[101] Ibid, 10.
[102] Connelly, 2012, 13; Connelly, "Introduction," 2003, 5.

often interpreted as primitive and naïve, and I suggest attributions of the grotesque to *The Old Working Class* are tied to their affinity with folk art styles and subject matter. The grotesque challenges the neo-classical ideals on which Western art aesthetic theory and art history were based, and in the case of these murals, opposes them to what had become in Canada during the first half of the twentieth century, the accepted language of public sculpture. *The Old Working Class* is perceived as grotesque because it introduced, not only the folk themselves, but also "folk" sculpture into a public space, overturning class and aesthetic hierarchies, challenging expectations of public art in a modern public building.

Connelly further argues we see the grotesque "where established realities are put into play, pulled into a liminal space that both calls them into question and throws them open to possibility."[103] By way of their ambiguous conjunction of place, style and matter, the murals make material the experience of otherness based on class, ethnic, and cultural markers, but at the same time open up the opportunity for audience reflection and dialogue. Importantly, these so-called grotesque caricatures "make visible a cultural breach, creating a condition that is perceived as grotesque as it elides difference and destabilizes what had been absolute and unquestioned."[104] An egalitarian society would recognize that the working class is not a grotesque theme nor are working class people grotesque. What disturbs is their transgression of spatial and representational boundaries through their depiction in a folk art style as public art. The murals question assumptions about who constitutes the social and political élite of the province, the natural subjects for the province's figurative sculpture; instead Saskatchewan's Anglo-Saxon political and social élite, whose task was to control and integrate the unruly eastern European immigrants, have been physically displaced by them as public figures.

Those outside the mainstream concerned with issues such as race and ethnicity, like Cicansky, have adopted the grotesque before as a tool of confrontation, as its outsider quality allows them to articulate their values and concerns.[105] This protest is mitigated, however, by support of the government who, as the purchasers of the work implicitly suggest their approval of its content. This is compounded by the name of the building, the Sturdy-Stone Centre, after

[103] Connelly, 2012, 16.
[104] Ibid, 13-14.
[105] Ibid, 23; Henry B. Wonham, "The Age of Caricature, the Age of Realism, in *Playing the Races: Ethnic Caricature and American Literary Realism,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed 12 June 2013, Oxford Scholarship Online, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195161946.003.0001.

two prominent early Saskatoon CCF politicians, John Sturdy and Arthur Stone, men of the people. *The Old Working Class* therefore also serves to visually impress upon us the socialist ideology of a particular government and the support it received from the working classes and new immigrants. These murals, then, have been perceived as grotesque because they breach cultural expectations and circumvent margins, challenging some viewers to question aesthetic and social expectations and re-examine historical prejudices.

The grotesque nature of *The Old Working Class* lies in a combination of its subject matter, artistic vocabulary, and its site. How then does the added designation as "caricature" contribute to its transgressive authority? Caricature is a complex subject and in applying the term to these murals, Miller raises significant questions about the murals' functions. At a basic level, Ernst Gombrich and Ernst Kris pointedly and repeatedly associated caricature with comic attack, even defining caricature "as a process where—under the influence of aggression — primitive structures are used to ridicule the victim."[106] They also suggest caricature exploits a deformity that will reveal the subject "in all its littleness or ugliness."[107] In a 1981 publication on caricature, contemporaneous with the Sturdy-Stone murals, Edward Lucie-Smith expanded the idea of what is victimized from a person to a wide range of situations or behaviours. He suggested that caricature emphasized the satiric,[108] which uses ridicule as a way of "denouncing, deriding, or ridiculing vice, folly, indecorum, abuses, or evils of any kind."[109] The same year William Feaver emphatically stated: "Caricature is always Us against Them."[110] For Lucie-Smith the most powerful caricature made moral satire and, like Connelly, he understood the manner this was achieved resulted from some form of cultural rupture. Referring specifically to art practices he explained:

> [I]t often breaks through the artistic conventions of the time…It makes use not only of wild distortions and exaggerations, but of incongruities of all kinds. It is not obliged to be consistent; it is set free from the demands of artistic decorum. All it has to do is express an idea that is accessible to a large number of people.[111]

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[106] Ernst Kris and Ernst Gombrich, "The Principles of Caricature," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 18, (1938): 321-22, 324, 326, 338, 339.
[107] Ibid, 1938, 322.
[108] Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Art of Caricature,* (Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, 1981), 13.
[109] "satire, " OED Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press, 2013.
[110] William Feaver, "Introduction," in *Masters of Caricature: From Hogarth and Gillray to Scarfe and Levine,* ed. Ann Gould, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 9.
[111] Lucie-Smith, 1981, 19.

One aspect of the following discussion will be to examine what might be considered the tools of caricature in this particular case. Another task is to identify who and/or what might be the targets of the suggested caricature, the victims, and clarify "us" and "them."

Popular caricature requires an image accessible to the public in terms of content, style and diffusion, and in the case of social satire, it should concern itself with "human types and everyday situations." [112] Because its efficacy is contingent on reaching a wide audience, its medium is as relevant as the image, and print has been usually used because its distribution in great numbers assures it reaches its public.[113] *The Old Working Class*, although not a "caricature" distributed in the print media, does have a potential to reach a wide local public, in fact anyone in the general geographic area of central Saskatchewan that ever has to engage with the provincial government in Saskatoon. Its prominent location above the elevators on the ground floor, distinctive high-relief surfaces and visibility from the lobby make it noticeable to anyone entering the building. Sculpture has occasionally been used for caricature such as Honoré Daumier's early nineteenth-century terra cottas, which did not have as broad an audience as print caricatures. Using Daumier's small bronze *Ratapoil* c.1851 as an example, Lucie-Smith suggests caricatures are less successful as sculptures because the denseness of the bronze medium opposes the effectiveness of the quickly drawn caricature executed with simplified strokes: minimal lines contradict the power of the subject it is representing and critiquing. [114] Because the clay original of *Ratapoil* has been destroyed, in terms of the effects of its material, a better comparison to *The Old Working Class* would be Daumier's series of thirty-six painted terra cotta caricatures, *Célèbrités du Juste Milieu*, c1832, based on contemporary French political figures. These sculptures served first as models for lithographs, and were subsequently cast in bronze in the twentieth century.[115] The visceral, sketchy impressions of Daumier's hastily hand-worked and unfinished terra cotta busts contrast with the solidity and legitimacy of their translation into expressive and expensive bronzes, where the complex polished surfaces scatter the visual details,

[112] Ibid 13; McPhee, " 'Shoot Folly as It Flies': Humor on Paper," 1981, 3.
[113] Lucie-Smith, 1981, 14; Kris and Gombrich, 1938, 330.
[114] Lucie-Smith, 1981, 97; See also Musée d'Orsay: Musée de l'Orangerie, Honoré Daumier, Ratapoil, RF927, accessed 22 June 2013, http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/home.html; Kris and Gombrich, 1938, 324.
[115] Jeanne L. Wasserman, *Daumier Sculpture: A Critical and Comparative Study,* (Greenwich Connecticut: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1969). Wasserman's book provides a detailed account of the methods of moulding and casting Daumier's clay sculptures and an extensive catalogue of his clay works.

masking the hurried and economical gestures inherent in the matt clay sketch.[116] The subversive nature of Daumier's sculptures is much more pronounced in clay than bronze. As a medium for academic sculpture, bronze signifies the legitimacy of those political figures Daumier set out to satirize, and paradoxically, also validates the power of the subversive nature of the caricature, but in hindsight only, as these caricatures were not cast in bronze until their satiric power had lost its immediate disruptive potency in France. The unglazed clay of *The Old Working Class* certainly refutes associations with permanency and legitimacy tied to the material, processes, and cost of bronze public sculpture, suggesting it as an unfinished work. What is perhaps being caricatured are these very associations, materials, processes and costs.

Figure 100: *Celebrities of the Juste Milieu,* Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) Count Auguste Hilarion de Kératry, also called The Obsequious One

A contrast between the clay execution of the *Célèbrités du Juste Milieu* that range in height between 12.1 and 22.9 cm. and the life-size figures in *The Old Working Class* plainly shows Cicansky's carefully sculpted and finished figures are the antithesis of sculpted caricature.[117] There are no cracks, holes, smears, added hunks of clay, exaggerated joining marks or chipped edges found in *Célèbrités du Juste Milieu*. As Lucie- Smith has recognized, the

[116] For images of the painted terra cotta busts see Honoré Daumier, *Célèbrités du Juste Milieu,* Musée d'Orsay: Musée de l'Orangerie, RF 3477-3512, accessed 22 June 2013, http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/home.html. For images of the polished bronze busts see The National Gallery of Art Washington D.C., The Rosenwald Collection, 1943.3. 1-16, 18-24 and 1951.17.3-15, accessed 22 June, 2013, http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb.html.
[117] For dimensions of the Daumier's caricatures see Musée d'Orsay, Daumier, Honoré, *Célèbrités du Juste Milieu* , RF 3477-3512.

power of monumentality generally mitigates an interpretation of a work as caricature, because monumentality undermines caricature as "the quickest of arts." [118] The respect Cicansky had for his subject is attested to through the care of execution seen in the extended time of making that required research into an appropriate clay body, financial investment into the raw materials, careful preparation and manipulation of the raw material, skilful and calculated handling of tools and equipment, and vigilance during the long drying and firing stages. These tasks mirror the time, energy, and multiple levels of skill involved in the careful and successful husbandry expressed in *The Old Working Class.* While its unheroic, rotund figures challenge the classical ideal attached to usual figure representation in public art, therefore suggesting caricature, the solidity, careful execution and monumentality of these murals counteract this reading. If it is considered a monumental public caricature, as suggested in *Arts West*, we are compelled to query what epic subject might be critiqued, denounced or ridiculed that would merit such a massive calculated statement, taking into account the vast social, political, economic and cultural power these subjects would wield that would require such satire. If, in fact, social caricature is inherent in these sculptures, it must have been with the approbation of the political establishment, and the question remains what and/or whose power would be critiqued? Who comprise the "us" and "them?"

The NDP government support for the murals rules out as the target of satire the values of settler husbandry or Eastern European immigrant history expressed in *The Old Working Class.* The legislative record of Blakeney's government that espoused a socially inclusive society and for the most part sought to improve the living and working conditions of the working and middle classes, also counters any reading that satirizes this class and ethnic group. From those who formed the old working class, came the social values that resulted in the formation of the Co-op movement and the CCF and NDP parties and these people were the constituency that benefited from the introduction of medicare, student loans and the wheat board, and the nationalization of the potash industry. They formed the backbone of the highly touted multiculturalism of Saskatchewan. The elections of the CCF and NDP governments depended on this community's support. The provincial government as commissioners of the work would not have approved,

[118] Lucie-Smith, 1981, 124. Lucie-Smith uses the example of Willem de Kooning's painting series, *Women.* See also Feaver, 1981), 39. Lucie-Smith has ignored that many caricaturists of the latter part of the twentirth century actually painstakingly drew their caricatures in which they included much detail. Among these are Montreal's Aislin and New York's David Levine. Thanks to Dr. Dominic Hardy for pointing this out.

paid for, or allowed to stand a public mural that it considered mocked its supporters.[119] If *The Old Working Class* is a caricature of individuals, community or values, then the boundaries between them and us are not clear within this context.

The specific cultural group referred to in these murals raises the question of the element of ethnic caricature, sometimes used as a strategy of resistance for those wishing to highlight issues around ethnicity. As a child of The Garlic Flats, Cicansky's outsider status in terms of the Anglo-Saxon community was made abundantly clear when, still a young boy, he was categorized as "not one of us" by a friend's mother.[120] When the words, "not one of us" were uttered to Cicansky, he became recognized as a type, a caricature. This corresponds to what American literary historian Henry B. Wonham argues occurs when the "determining features of identity" are predicated on "ethnic, cultural, or class 'characteristics,'" where "individuals are traceable to certain generic sources, and … 'type' is the hidden truth behind the illusion of 'character.'"[121] By means of a visual vocabulary that references "folk art" that the Fine Art Academy maintains can only represent "types" rather than actual people, *The Old Working Class,* presents to us a "type" that articulates social and behavioural norms. But rather than "casting suspicion on the integrity of the representation" through "an abbreviated style," [122] the murals interrogate the stereotype through their solidity, permanency, and prominence. In a sense the figures declare: "You can caricature us, but we are here to stay." In discussing the writings of the late nineteenth-century African-American writer, Charles Chestnutt, Wonham suggests the strategy of "ininhabiting, rather than resisting, the forms that threatened to limit …aspirations is one that can…challenge the dehumanizing force of ethnic caricature."[123] Harvard literature and culture historian Eric Sundquist also argues in black African literature there is the potency in "seiz[ing] the stereotype in order to subvert it." Like Chestnutt's appropriation of stereotypical images of the Black American experience diffused by the majority culture, Cicansky performed "an authorial act of metamorphosis" in the *Old Working Class,* a sophisticated strategy of resistance to stereotypes,

[119] An example of a public mural, albeit not a ceramic mural, which was removed immediately after its installation by the government that commissioned it, because it critiqued American politics, considered message, is Greg Curnoe's Dorval Airport mural, 1978. Townsend-Gault, 1983, 125.
[120] Kerr, 2004, 18.
[121] Wonham, 2004, 18.
[122] Ibid, 32.
[123] Ibid, 9.While this essay addresses the interplay between caricature and realism in the works of an Afro-American writer at the turn of the twentieth century, elements of the strategies assumed by Chestnutt are relevant in understanding *The Old Working Class* as Cicansky too worked from the inside of the culture he represented.

by embracing and transforming them.[124] While the murals make connections with a broader audience through shared immigrant experiences, they also highlight the problems of the construction of ethnic "otherness," even while celebrating it. What might be then considered the object of satire is the construction of "otherness" and its derision through the resort to "types." The perception of *The Old Working Class* as "grotesque caricatures" can only be attributed to either an ethnic slur, the "us" and "them" based on ethnicities entrenched in political, social, cultural and economic power structures to which these relief murals contribute, or a recognition of a highly sophisticated strategy to question the rights and limits of citizenship. In other words, do they speak to the Anglo-conformity approach that dominated Saskatchewan and Canadian political policies until the 1960s, or the liberal multiculturalism approach that had recently been adopted at Saskatchewan provincial and Canadian federal levels? Or do they challenge us to recall the past approach in the present that would lead to future policies?

Contemporaneous with its installation, *The Old Working Class* was compared to the paintings of both the sixteenth-century Netherlander, Pieter Bruegel by poet, Eli Mandel in *Artscanada*[125] and the twentieth-century American, Thomas Hart Benton, again in the *Arts West* review. Significantly no connections were made to any form of sculpture, reflecting and reinforcing the established painting/sculpture hierarchy of the Western art canon. Bruegel and Benton, four centuries and half a world apart, were concerned with representing rural working people and looked to vernacular idioms to represent their subjects. Notably, their works were also linked with caricature. Bruegel the Elder, a sixteenth-century painter of peasant life and illustrator of folk lore, has been called "a robust Flemish realist" who rejected Italian influences but was influenced by mannerism.[126] Benton is considered to be a painter of primarily American mid-western rural working class people, who represented a bulwark against the European avant-garde, as his mission was to transform European painting practices into a genuine American style.[127] In both these cases, the painters, like Cicansky, developed particular artistic styles to depict their socially marginal subject matter, associated with particular geographical regions and cultures, by fusing and modifying contemporary forms and techniques. According to the

[124] Eric J. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations,* (Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1993) 381.
[125] Whether this is Pieter Bruegel the Elder or his son, Pieter Bruegel the Younger, is not clear. However, they both depicted scenes of peasants.
[126] Walter S. Gibson, *Bruegel,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 12.
[127] Matthew Baigell, "The Beginnings of 'The American Wave' and the Depression," *Art Journal* 27, no. 4 (Summer 1968): 393.

comparisons by Mandel and Miller, *The Old Working Class* falls into a category of art designated regional and folk. Why, in particular were these artists chosen as reference points for *The Old Working Class*?

Bruegel's work had attracted much art historical attention in the 1970s through to the early 1980s, resulting in the publication of at least nine English language books of which five appeared between 1971 and 1977 and four between 1980 and 1981. As a basis of comparison he would therefore be familiar to the 1979 *Artscanada* author and audience. Bruegel's sixteenth-century paintings and engravings of peasant life are appreciated for their rusticity, humour, and social comment, attributes also applicable to *The Old Working Class*.[128] Many of Bruegel's works appear "deeply transgressive," anchored in what Connelly suggests is the carnivalesque's obsession with the appetites and excretions of the flesh.[129] Like many of Bruegel's characters, the figures of *The Old Working Class* too, are rotund, rural, busy with their lives, and humorous, themselves "fleshy, " but also close to the flesh of animals, fowl and the earth. In *The Old Working Class* humour is expressed through such details as the woman waving the garlic sausage, a man chewing a cigar, sidelong glances, and quizzical, attentive, and thieving animals, all postures alien to public sculpture. Cicansky's people are also engaged in the same kinds of activities that concern Bruegel's subjects, the hands-on tasks of earning a living including the raising and consumption of food, expressed through the meticulous rendering of their material culture. *The Old Working Class* has a close thematic affinity with Bruegel's 1559 engraving, *Prudence*, which celebrates successful husbandry and wise living where hard work and celebration of its rewards are balanced.[130] Bruegel's work has often been written about in terms of caricature because he assembled into the fine arts elements of the grotesque traditionally linked to the folk culture of Europe.[131] Certainly the simple lines and forms, and the seeming use of "types" in the works of both these artists create links to folk tradition and to caricature. A recent alternative reading of Bruegel's figures, applicable as well to those in *The Old Working*

[128] See Gibson, 1977; Walter S. Gibson, *Pieter Bruegel and the Art of Laughter*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006); Philippe and Françoise Roberts-Jones, *Pieter Bruegel*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002).
[129] Connelly, 2012, 85-86.
[130] Gibson, 1977, fig. 34, 63.
[131] Connelly, 2012, 17.

Class, suggests that their "generalized faces" are better understood as "particular personalities," lending them a "portrait-like quality" that mitigates the element of caricature.[132]

Figure 101: *Prudence*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1559

Figure 102: "Pioneer Days and Early Settlers," *The Social History of the State of Missouri*, Thomas Hart Benton, 1935-36

[132] Roberts-Jones, 2002, 35; Shearer West, *Portraiture,* Oxford History of Art Series, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 21.

Caricature has also been considered an element in the mid-Western depression-era paintings of Benton. The American art historian, Matthew Baigell published two essays about Benton in 1968 and 1970 in *The Art Journal*, and a book, *Thomas Hart Benton* in 1975, the year of Benton's death. Baigell claims Benton's figurative work of the mid 1920s took on what he describes as almost caricature-like highly individualized representations of local people.[133] Like other painters before him, Benton stretched the boundaries of likeness to explore what traits were needed to express certain characteristics; however, this does not always lead to caricature as William Hogarth pointed out in his 1743 etching, *Characters and Caricaturas.*[134] Benton and others exploited folk art styles contributing to "The American Wave" movement dedicated to countering European painting styles by integrating into their works local and indigenous art practices. Baigell asserts this movement "defined a moment in the history of nationalism in American art," and contributed to the legitimization of American folk art.[135] Two decades after Baigell's observation, another art historian dismissed Benton's work as "pure Americana, lovable but simple-minded illustration, or kitsch," made by "an unsophisticated, down-to-earth Midwesterner."[136] Like Benton, Cicansky used an artistic vocabulary that recalled folk art, and his Sturdy-Stone murals were created in a spirit of the articulation of a regional identity separate from the dominant trends of international abstract modernism, and like Benton, his figurative style evoked a quizzical response, and was interpreted as lack of sophistication.

The comparison of Cicansky's monochrome ceramic murals to Benton's work is striking as Benton became famous for his lively, provocative and colourful depression-era murals painted as part of the American federal government's Works Progress Administration (WPA) program.[137] Like Benton's large painted murals, Cicansky's public ceramic murals were also supported by government programs for the arts, but within the context of unprecedented regional wealth in Saskatchewan. This comparison suggests we consider that, while some of Benton's work is closely associated with a nostalgia for the pioneering Anglo-Saxon, *The Old Working Class* is based on the Eastern European immigrant experience of attempting to come to terms

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[133] Matthew Baigell, "Thomas Hart Benton in the 1920's," *Art Journal* 29, no. 4 (Summer 1970), 427.
[134] Connelly, 2012, 100-102; Lucie-Smith, 1981, 53-62.
[135] Baigell, 1968, 387.
[136] Greta Berman, "Review: Thomas Hart Benton," in "Depictions of the Dispossessed," ed. Cecelia F. Klein, special issue, *Art Journal* 49, no.2 (Summer, 1990): 199.
[137] Thomas Hart Benton's murals include *America Today*, 1930, New School for Social Research, New York and *The Arts of Life in America*, 1932, painted for the Whitney Museum of Modern Art.

with the Anglo-Saxon culture of the Canadian prairies. Despite their common subject matter the figurative vocabularies of Benton and Cicansky are patently different, elongated and angular in Benton's work, but fleshed out in Cicansky's murals so much so that they "oozed fecundity" in "pneumatic versions of…Benton." [138] Miller's humorous remarks on the rotund body shapes and the full figured women of *The Old Working Class*[139] describing them in relation to their lushness and the fertility of the land, brings to mind Connelly's observations of the carnivalesque in relation to Bruegel's paintings and etchings with their emphasis on appetites of the flesh. A similar observation of these pioneer working class women as "ample-bosomed babushkas… [that] speak of Cicansky's ethnic Rumanian upbringing" was made in 1984 in an article about Western sculptural clay.[140] Such sexualized references to immigrant women's bodies, often accompanied by remarks about their intellectual inferiority and "natural" ability for hard physical work was a strategy Anglo-conformists had adopted to justify these women as racially different.[141] From this remark it is also clear that these writers were aware of the qualities of strength and health alluded to through the robust figures in *The Old Working Class*. Even as Benton's gaunt figures convey want and stress, Cicansky's fleshy and active people remind us they survived very successfully, if under the constant and continuing spectre of a sexualized ethnicity.

Each of the figures in *The Old Working Class* is highly individualized, so much so that we can identify recurring characters in the narrative. We have seen how the idea of type and its multiple ramifications have been significant in the reception of *The Old Working Class,* and in particular much social satire of the working classes relied on representing them as types rather than individuals.[142] Here, this is mitigated by Cicansky's public identification of his grandmother as the woman with a headscarf who waves her garlic sausage, an identification that thwarts the caricature: to publicly satirize one's grandmother is an unlikely action. Without this information the casual viewer would assume that either all or none of the figures represent actual people. If this line of reasoning is followed, the other figures could well have been based on Cicansky's

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[138] Miller, 1979, 10.
[139] "pneumatic," *Oxford English Dictionary, OED Online*, http://0-www.oed.com.mercury.concordia.ca/view/Entry/146303?redirectedFrom=pneumatic#eid. The definition for pneumatic used in a humourous way: "Of, relating to, or characteristic of a woman with a well-rounded figure, esp. a large bosom; (of a woman) having a well-rounded figure, esp. large-bosomed."
[140] David Lasker, "Clay Comes of Age," *Western Living* 1, no.9 (Nov. 1984): 61.
[141] Adley, 1999, 81-83.
[142] This not only includes Pieter Bruegel the Elder, but also William Hogarth in the eighteenth century.

friends, family and neighbours, past and present. [143] The significance of identifying just one figure raises questions regarding the link between anonymity and class; moreover, if these figures are specific as well as general, then they have yet another function as public art – celebration of individuals whose personal day-to-day heroics are usually considered beneath official recognition.

Art historian Shearer West attempts to pull apart this complex category of representation and some of her observations are helpful as we consider the reception accorded Cicansky's murals. West points out portraiture should be understood within the play between type and individuality dependent upon varying cultural contexts. Likeness can refer to a person's physical features, but also represent social position or 'inner life' such as their characters or virtues.[144] If a link to all of humanity is achieved through recognition of individual subjectivity coupled with type, then we begin to understand the purpose of their anonymity. [145] The celebration of a class or group of people rather than heroic individuals underscores the values of successful cooperation, rather than triumphant individualism.

Understood together, *The Old Working Class* comprises a group portrait composed of dynamically posed figures that interact with one another across the murals. Because of figure interaction arising from a compositional variety possible within group portraits, their theatricality increases. The theatricality of the figures in *The Old Working Class,* evident in their poses, gestures and facial expressions, emphasized by their high relief surfaces, allows them to bring their "play" to the official seat of the provincial government in Saskatoon as they interact with each other and the viewers. As West points out the importance of the display of group portraiture by the group, and in this case, also the government who commissioned it, is indicative of a "desire to create or demonstrate a sense of shared identity."[146] One shared identity formed by the members of the group represented is of course, based on ethnicity, the Eastern European pioneers, a group identity strengthened through anonymity, but resistant to pure "type" by the one recognized and recognizable portrait. By repeating the theme in five different figure groupings displayed in conjunction with one another, a fifteen member group has been formed,

[143] Joe Fafard was recognized for his small painted ceramic sculptures of neighbours living in his rural community, but each of these was identified by, at least, a first name.
[144] West, 2004, 21.
[145] Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting,* vol. I, (New York and London: Harper Collins, 1971). 194, referred in West, 2004, 24.
[146] West, 2004, 105.

one large enough to have social, cultural, and perhaps economic and political impact. If however, the idea of a class type were emphasized, another group identity would emerge based on the common experiences of farmers and their families who struggled through the years of depression and WWII. This is the group Eli Mandel referred to when he understood the murals as representing the manners and morals of several immigrant groups who settled the prairies.[147] A final group identity is implied through the murals' location in the Sturdy-Stone Centre where their very contiguity with the building allows the government, who commissioned and display *The Old Working Class* to be inserted into this group of pioneers. The murals, the people of Saskatchewan and the government mutually construct their identities, none of which have any place within the context of grotesque, satire, or caricature.

Much of the discussion around the use of the terms grotesque and caricature to describe *The Old Working Class* arises within the context of ethnicity, an important topic during that decade in the Prairie Provinces. In 1977, the year Cicansky made *The Old Working Class,* several literary and visual art works emerged that reinforced the power and importance of East European prairie immigrant voices. Previously, class rather than ethnicity was used to explain cultural differences, with at least one Ukrainian-Canadian writer glossing over differences in immigrant experiences by amalgamating all ethnic and immigrant experience into one.[148] This strategy, as literature scholar Lindy Ledohowski argues, "ultimately insinuates that there is nothing individual or different enough to distinguish among various ethnic groups."[149] The multicultural policy of Trudeau's federal Liberal government and the economic and educational successes of the children and grandchildren of these immigrants created an atmosphere where writers and artists from those communities could and did tell their particular families' and communities' stories. Because these writers were no longer "strangers" but "hyphenated" Canadians, receiving official approbation through federal and provincial government funding programs, their experiences became part of Canada's multicultural ethos.[150]

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[147] Mandel, 1979, 15.
[148] Ledohowski refers specifically to two books by the Ukrainian-Canadian writer, Vera Lysenko, *Yellow Boots* (1954) and *Westerly Wild,* 1956. Lindy Ledohowski, "Becoming the Hyphen: The Evolution of English language Ukrainian-Canadian Literature," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 39, no.1-2 (2007): 109-111.
[149] Ibid, 110.
[150] Ledohowski, 2007, 108

The great gulf that existed between the European immigrants and the established Anglo-Saxon community forms the basis of Myrna Kostash's 1977 book, *All of Baba's Children*.[151] Kostash, who moved from Toronto to the Alberta community of her family's origins, quotes the oral testimony of immigrants and their children as well as official archival material that articulates the Anglo-Saxon establishment position. Multiculturalist scholar, Richard J.F. Day, suggests although written within the emerging discourse of liberal multiculturalism and "contribut[ing] to the historical visibility of the non-canonical peoples in Canada," *All of Baba's Children* actually "challenged the multiculturalist origin myth" that pervades current Canadian discourse, where we are all equally immigrants and multicultural from the First Nations to the present day.[152] Kostash recognized the specifics of time and place in the immigrant experience. That same year, Eli Mandel, a Saskatchewan native of Jewish-Ukrainian decent, poet and literary critic residing and working in Toronto, published a book length poem, *Out of Place,* based on his experiences of growing up in Saskatchewan and cemented by a visit to the remnants of Jewish immigrant colonies near Estevan where he was born.[153] As one Mandel scholar has pointed out, he also believed in looking beyond the "local colour and parochial themes" and "wrote much poetry centred on the local, but all of it radically transcends the conventions of regionalism."[154] This desire for the specificity *and* generalization of the immigrant experience and its memories indicate a tension attached to particular hyphenated identities, as well as a harkening back to the Anglo-conformity model where all immigrant experiences could be levelled out. This levelling is evident in Mandel's description in *Artscanada* of the "Ukrainian, Scottish, English manners and morals" in Cicansky's *Old Working Class* mural. While he has teased apart the British-Canadian ethnicities, he has assumed the eastern European ethnicity to be Ukrainian despite Cicansky's Romanian heritage.

[151] Myrna Kostash, *All of Baba's Children,* (Edmonton Alberta: Hurtig Publishers, 1977).
[152] Richard J.F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity,* (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2000), 29.
[153] Eli Mandel, Eli, "Biographical Note," *From Room to Room: the Poetry of Eli Mandel* by Eli Mandel, (Waterloo Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2011), viii.
[154] Peter Webb, "Introduction" in Mandel 2011, xii.

Figure 103: *Manitoba Party*, William Kurelek, 1964

Another important second-generation voice was that of William Kurelek, the prolific Ukrainian-Canadian visual artist who immortalized prairie rural life throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Besides successfully exhibiting his paintings on this theme at Toronto's Isaac Gallery, and within Ukrainian-Canadian organizations, the two children's' books he wrote and illustrated, *A Prairie Boy's Winter*, 1973 and a *Prairie Boy's Summer*, 1975, were critically well-received.[155] Both these books, while making a very few scattered references to Ukrainian expressions constructed as an educational bridge, did not emphasize a specific ethnocultural prairie experience, but related in both text and images a prairie experience with which an Anglo-Canadian audience could also identify. Difference was acknowledged, but minimally. The voices of Cicansky and *The Old Working Class* joined these others that articulated an immigrant community's story, emerging as liberal multiculturalism became an accepted provincial and national discourse and policy. While the title of *The Old Working Class* makes class rather than ethnicity their essential element, thus glossing over cultural differences, the material culture

[155] William Kurelek: The Messenger, "Biography," Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2013, accessed 6 June, 2013, http://kurelek.ca/biography.

references contained in them contradict this elision, reinstating the importance of ethnicity in the rural immigrant experience.

The Old Working Class also became a benchmark for other representations of the eastern European immigrant experience in Saskatchewan. In 1980, the "boring" and "uninspired" fibreglass sculpture *Regina* in Regina's Cornwall Centre, by Toronto sculptor Judith Christine Mills, was compared unfavourably in a *Leader-Post* newspaper article to *The Old Working Class* murals that "capture the humour and vitality of Saskatchewan 'folk'."[156] However, perhaps as important as *Regina*'s style in the critique, was its authorship and ownership. Made by an outsider to the province who was criticized for working with clichés and stereotypes, it had been commissioned by Charles Tabachnick, renowned art collector and the Chairman of the Board of the Toronto corporation that owned the shopping centre. Ironically, Tabachnick's father had also emigrated from the Ukrainian-Romanian area of Europe in the early twentieth century. The receptions of these two figurative works a year apart illustrate their power to elicit remarks that reveal tensions around regionalism, ethnic identity, and cultural self-representation at this period. Kwon's observation that membership in a community went a long way in validating an artist's public art is certainly applicable here.

Moving into the Future

The Old Working Class was a series of murals that extended Cicansky's reputation beyond one related to small-scale ceramic sculptures. While he was already well known for his associations with Funk and folk that had brought him critical acclaim, these murals established him within another kind of representational politics and strategies. To make these murals effective, successful, and acceptable, Cicansky had to be aware of a new kind of audience, other than the ones encountered in galleries and museum and post-secondary educational institutions, a cross-section of the Saskatchewan population. The vocabulary of *The Old Working Class* moves categorically away from the critique associated with Funk, embracing the hopefulness of the folk vocabularies and subject matter. These five murals celebrate ethnic and class difference while simultaneously launching a critique against it.

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[156] Denise Ball, "Regina is a big disappointment," *Leader-Post,* c1981. Box 6/6 Newspaper Articles Etc. Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Judith Christine Mills: Sculptor, painter Author & Illustrator, "sculptures," accessed 20 June 2013, http://www.judithchristinemills.com/id16.html.

This new way of working affected how Cicansky was perceived as a ceramicist. Historically his small tableaux linked him to the figurine branch of ceramic history, one associated with derision and the domain of domesticity and women, but *The Old Working Class* shifted him into the monumental ceramic figurative tradition with antecedents in the religious terra cotta sculpture of the Renaissance. As an astute businessman, Cicansky applied the technical and compositional strategies he had developed for *The Old Working Class* to good advantage. In 1982 he produced a series of unglazed terra cotta figurative murals, smaller versions of the themes and compositions he had explored in *The Old Working Class.* Among them were *The Harvesters,* 45.7x 45.7 x 20.3 cm. where an older couple embraces behind a table piled with garden produce. In this mural the female figure was again based upon Cicansky's grandmother, "an earth-mother type."[157] The sensual, loving, and even sexual nature of the cycle of gardening is alluded to by the man's hand on the woman's breast, an erotic element missing from the Sturdy-Stone public murals.[158] Variations on *The Old Working Class* appear in the beige glazed tondo of 1980, *How The West Was Really Won*, 76 x 11.5cm.[159] These murals, comprised of people conversing around the table where food is displayed, are thematically and compositionally linked with the Sturdy-Stone murals and their sketches. Cicansky's Sturdy-Stone murals also propelled him onto centre stage in terms of public and corporate mural commissions. In 1978 he responded to a call by The Co-operative Life Insurance Company based in Regina, for a lobby mural, ten feet in diameter, suggesting as his subject the city of Regina. This polychrome mural, *Regina My World*, was completed in 1978**,** and featured a circular frame of ridged wheat fields with Regina as an island in a sea of wheat.[160] This new ceramic relief approach, the framed tondo, was the vocabulary Cicansky turned to for the *New Working Class,* 1981.

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[157] Kevin Forrest, "Regina Clay: The Art of Invention and Interpretation," *Arts West* 7, no.10, (Nov. 1982): 15, 17. The Harvesters was purchased by Saskatchewan Telecommunications. Ferguson and Philips, 1983, cat. 28, 51.
[158] Other murals in this series that were purchased by the Potash Corporation of Canada, are *Table Salad*, 53 cm. x 53 cm. x 13.5 cm, and *Tea Time* 50.5 cm. x 48 cm. x 11.5 cm. 1982. Ferguson and Philips, 1983, cat. 29, 30, 52, 53. These two works are composed much like Arneson's earlier *Smorgibob The Cook*, 1971, a figure at far end of a table laden with food, in these cases, unprocessed garden vegetables.
[159] Auction Flex, "Lot # 44 Information, Victor Cicansky, *How the West Was Really Won*," accessed 1 June 2013, http://www.auctionflex.com/showlot.ap?co=1&weiid=550432&lang=En.
[160] "Regina: My World -1978," Box 1 File 9, Slides 34-55, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

Figure 104: *The Harvesters*, Victor Cicansky, 1981

Figure 105: *Regina My World*, Victor Cicansky, 1978

Moving Up: The New Working Class, 1982

Meeting the Murals

The five polychrome tondos comprising *The New Working Class,* each five feet in diameter, crown the elevator doors on the ninth floor of the Sturdy Stone centre. Like their predecessor, *The Old Working Class,* they represent labour, but in a more contemporary context. Each unit formed by the rectangular elevator with its respective tondo functions as an exclamation mark, and like Robert Billyard's five heraldic murals on the second floor, *The New Working Class* creates five points to pause. The vertical orientation of the elevator/mural entity also highlights the vertical movement through the building, contrasting with Malach's mural, *Untitled,* 1983, one floor below that emphasizes travel along the hall. In both colour and form, the circles of *The New Working Class* differ markedly from the monochromatic, vertically oriented rectangles of *The Old Working Class.* Executed in lower relief at twelve inches (30 cm.) they appear less massive.[161] The primary visual impact here is not mass, as it was with the *Old Working Class*, but rather colour. Polychrome torsos of the almost life-size figures of *The New Working Class* project from the tondos that are bordered in lower relief with individual patterns in shades of yellow. The overall use of a wide range of glossy glazes, sometimes as large blocks of colour, make the murals stand out against the more neutral and earthy tones of the stippled wall. As with *The Old Working Class*, each mural is well illuminated with two directed spots as well as florescent hall lighting. The tondos are arranged in two groups based on subtle thematic and compositional differences: the group of two represents people at work selling food; while the group of three depicts working people eating or drinking during a break. "Collegiality, Community and Cooperation" could be the subtitle for this mural series, themes that tie them to *The Old Working Class.*

[161] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.

Figure 106 *The New Working Class*
Fig. 106a "The Bakers" Fig.106b "The Clerk

Fig. 106c: "The Waitress" Fig. 106d: "The Builders" Fig. 106e: "The Secretaries"

The *New Working Class* was commissioned following the public call issued by the government in 1980 and completed 2 December 1981, a date inscribed onto the letterheads of the correspondence of the office workers, Grace and Lynn.[162] The five murals were delivered, accepted, and completely installed by Ketler before the end of the year.[163] Cicansky developed both sketches and clay maquettes on five subjects of contemporary working people interacting in pairs: "The Secretaries," "The Bakers," "The Builders," "The Clerk," and "The Waitress." As he progressively worked through his themes in sketches and maquettes, the figures became more rounded, detail was diminished in the fore and backgrounds, and the frames became more sculptural and prominent.[164] In the clay maquettes, objects or material poured from the central image onto the lower edge of the tondo's frame, sometimes commenting on abundance, sometimes inferring incompetence, but always disrupting the notion of containment. Disconcerting as well as comical, breads rolled from the counter, vegetables tumbled out of their bin, cement overflowed its form, and objects slid off the restaurant tablecloth - objects and things out of human control. From an art historical perspective this breach of frame and subject constitutes a critique of their interrelated functions within art. Cicansky first explored this in *Regina, My World,* where the wheat field frame is disrupted with Canada Geese flying over the surface and the Wascana River running through it. However, in the final Sturdy-Stone murals, half the size of *Regina, My World,* the strategy was abandoned. This choice was perhaps for visual clarity, but by reinstating the containment function of the frame Cicansky restored the notion of human control and worker competency. Initially the maquette frames were all the same, clay representations of textured boards with two nails on each end, cut into equal arcs. In the final versions, Cicansky refined these, developing a particular pattern for every frame that

[162] Forde, 1983, 3. Invoice from Ceramsky Art Works Ltd. to Department of Government Services, December 2, 1981, Box 1 File 1 Correspondence 77-83, 1980-81, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections. Cicansky's mother, Mary, passed away in 1981, an event that may have delayed the murals' completion. At the end of April, all the designs were completed, accepted and the invoice prepared, but Cicansky did not submit another one until July 31 for a quarter of the work completed and it was another three months before half of the work was done. Invoices from Ceramsky Art Works Ltd. to Department of Government Services, July 31 1981 and November 18 1981, Box 1File 1 Correspondence 77-83, 1980-81, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

[163] Invoice from Ceramsky Art Works Ltd. to Department of Government Services, December 19, 1981, Box 1 File 1 Correspondence 77-83, 1980-81, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

[164] Oversize Sketches New Working Class –1980 #7- #11, File 4, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

reflected the theme of the central image of the tondo: cups, envelopes, workers' gloves, cucumbers, and baked goods. This move shifted the murals' associations away from the wood framing often used in folk painting, and inserted a reference to the della Robbia tondos, adding another level of art historical references.

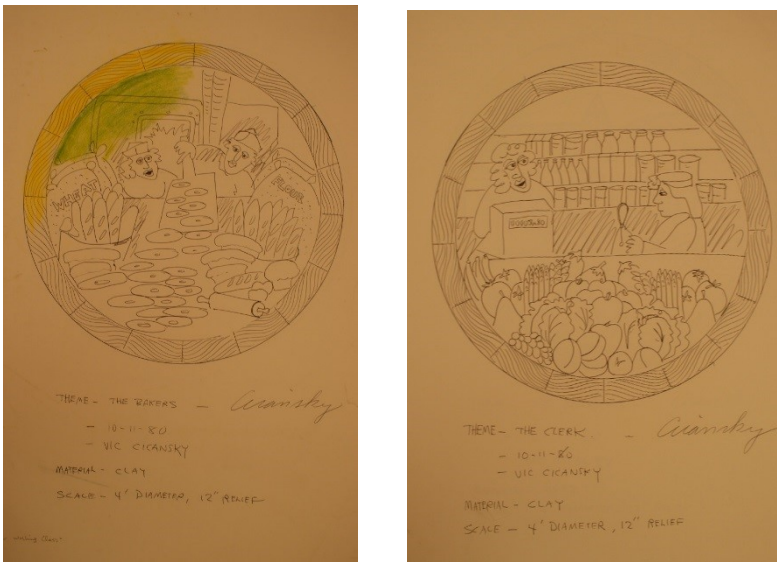

Figure 107: Initial sketches for the *New Working Class*, 1980
"The Bakers, "The Clerk,"

Figure 107: Initial sketches for the *New Working Class*, 1980
"The Bakers, "The Clerk," "The Waitress," "The Builders," The Secretaries"

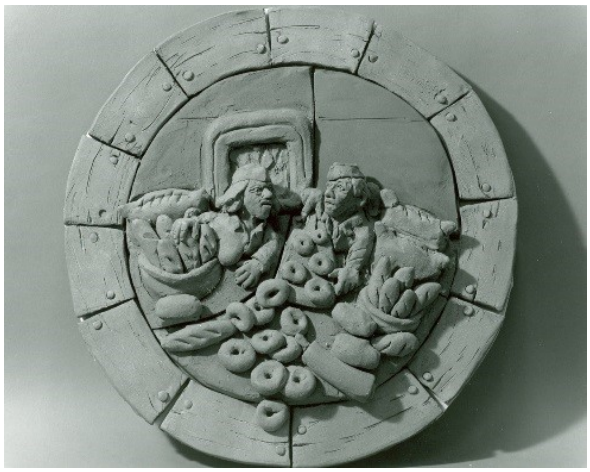

Figure 108: Maquettes for *The New Working Class,*
Fig. 108a: "The Bakers" Fig. 108b: "The Clerk"

Fig. 108c: "The Waitress" Fig. 108d: "The Builders"

As he moved from the maquettes to the full size tondos in *The New Working Class,* Cicansky enlarged the figures, increased their sculptural dimension, shifted them physically forward and minimized background information. The congenial personal interaction of the pairs of figures became the principle focus of the murals because they stand out in terms of relief projection and compositional integration. In the foreground, the objects of their labour support them visually, sculpturally, and metaphorically, illustrating Cicansky's opinion that work "identifies us, not in the political sense, but as something we need to do for a living."[165] Such an accent on the figures better acknowledges the viewing point of the audience, who must look up,

[165] Forde, 1983, 3; "Cicansky letter to Margo," Box 1, Correspondence 77-83 File 1, 1980-1981, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96 University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

allowing them to quickly and easily distinguish the figures, objects and architectural elements. With their clear delineation of forms and colour blocks, these Sturdy-Stone murals become very comprehensible.

The five murals are coherently distributed in their two groupings that relate to compositional arrangements as well as subject similarities. Two tondos representing working bakers and a green grocer with a customer, are placed above each of the two elevators, while facing them across the hall, above each of the three elevators, are three tondos depicting, respectively, office workers with their coffee, construction workers at lunch, and a man and waitress in a café. Besides the elderly woman purchasing vegetables at the grocers, all are middle-aged workers in an urban setting. In the grouping of two murals, "the bakers" and "the clerk," the foregrounds, up to a horizontal midline, are each densely packed with sculptured foodstuffs and cooking utensils, arranged almost in a vertical symmetry. In one, breads, donuts, wicker baskets, a rolling pin, and wooden board crowd the foreground; whereas, in the other a variety of vegetables, including potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages, squashes and cucumbers occupy the bottom half of the composition. In these two murals, the left hand figures finish slightly higher in the composition than the figures facing them in the top right quadrant. These compositional strategies create a unity between them. In the three murals across the hall, the foreground spaces are larger where pockets of detail stand out against the visible surfaces that support them, such as a butt-filled ashtray, pitcher and cup and saucer on a table, stack of papers and cups on desks, and a trowel and brick on construction forms. In these three murals the figures on the right finish higher. This visual harmony helps establish the emotional harmony of the murals and facilitates understanding the narrative content.

Cicansky described the genesis of this mural:

> When the Government of Saskatchewan asked me if I was interested in creating a public work …I got myself a cup of tea and a cinnamon bun and sat down where I could get a good view of *The Old Working Class*. As I sat there, I watched the people who worked on the main floor: the bakers in the bakery, the waitresses in the restaurants, the clerks in the mini-mart and maintenance people moving around the building. These workers were the children of *The Old Working Class* and gave me the idea for *The New Working Class* … These were first generation Canadians like me who lived with chrome and arborite in modern homes done up with fashionable designer colors. They were institutional workers, in specialized jobs and less connected to the land.[166]

[166] Victor Cicansky email to the author, 10 June 2008.

According to the material culture clues, there are no distinguishable ethnic markers, such as particular foods, crosses or headscarves, found in *The Old Working Class*, and Cicansky explained the ninth-floor figures were "the children of today – what ties people together." [167] Their surroundings link them to the employment experiences shared by people of many ethnicities who comprise the working, rather than professional classes, including paid labourers and small businesses owners. In his previous three-dimensional tableaux, largely framed as political and social critiques, Cicansky had turned to his contemporaries as subjects but these were clearly satiric, poking the political and cultural establishments. Here they are honoured, but not in a heroic idealization. Although using the same themes of labour, food and sociability seen in the *Old Working Class*, *The New Working Class* includes the commodification of all three in a locale outside the home. By moving the figures away from the private home space where markers of ethnic difference define the characters, Cicansky has inserted his new figures into public spaces where the signs of ethnic difference are erased. This reference to social integration, of course, raises questions about the hyphenated Canadian, and despite Cicansky's intention to avoid seeing work within a political context, the murals' location within this building cannot avoid a political context. Is the second-generation immigrant, despite being hyphenated, actually assimilated into a homogenized culture that dominates public spaces?[168] The titles of both Cicansky's murals tie them together, suggesting generational movement, linking them through class experience, but the visual clues in *The New Working Class* suggest cultural differentiation is no longer a public practice. Tellingly, representations of the professional classes were not included; this may have to wait until the third generation.

Cicansky initially conceived the narrative of *The New Working Class* through observations of the architectural space of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, where these activities were taking place. In this way they are a historical document of the building itself; but today, because of the changes in the building's use, the five murals seem to depict a more general urban space. Here the figures do not gaze down upon the audience nor are they indifferently staring into space as do many della Robbia figures. Rather, in every tondo two figures face one another on each

[167] Forde, 1983, 3; "Cicansky letter to Margo," Box 1, Correspondence 77-83, File 1, 1980-1981, Victor Cicansky Fonds 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[168] This homogenising of public spaces has been a contentious issue in Québec where, during the first session of the fortieth legislature, the Parti Québécois government tried to introduce Bill 60, "Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between men and women, and providing a framework for accommodation requests," popularly called the Charter of Secular Values.

side of the vertical median line, united through directed gazes and engaged in some concentrated social interaction or conversation. The importance of one-on-one conversation in *The New Working Class* highlights sociability, respect, and even some level of familiarity. As viewers, we are witnesses to encounters: interrupted conversations, the exchange of intimacies, banter between workmates, polite or impolite gossip and political debate, among many other possibilities. These suggested exchanges emphasize the importance of communication, inviting the viewer to imagine stories and write their own scripts, pulling its audience into a personal involvement with the subjects of the work. It also brings together multisensory experiences by highlighting hearing and speaking in a sculptural relief that, while accessed visually, through its volumetric surfaces stimulate the sense of touch. The strong narrative content of these murals involving figuration is antithetical to the premises of modern art, and attaches them more to the story-telling values developed in folk art or illustration, thereby contradicting the element of anonymity inherent in the modernist architectural style of the building. The murals insert the local human element into a global architectural style.

The tondo form of *The New Working Class* was a radical departure from Cicansky's first floor murals. He recounts his decision grew from his 1965 encounter with the Renaissance tondos of the della Robbia family in Europe.

> It was in Italy I first encountered della Robbia's ceramic tondos. These aesthetic and architectural inventions became an important influence in the early years of my clay work. The tondo form, a central theme surrounded by an organic border of fruits, nuts and leaves, influenced my own garden series of tondos. [169]

The della Robbia workshop in Florence included three generations, Luca, Andrea and Giovanni, who were known for their figurative tondos depicting civil and religious themes.[170] In particular Cicansky would have looked to Luca della Robbia's complex sculpted ceramic polychrome borders of fruits, leaves, and flowers that surrounded his reliefs. While the dominant glazes on many della Robbia tondos are blue and white, some works demonstrate a skilful use of a restricted palette of polychrome glazes that include purple, red, brown and black. The round

[169] Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.

[170] These works include: the *Twelve Apostles and the Four Evangelists*, c 1450, Pazzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence by Luca Della Robbia; the La Verna terra cottas including *Annunciation, Nativity, Allesandri Crucifixion, Madonna della Cintola,* and *Ascension* 1475-1490, Andrea della Robbia; and those representing characters from the Old Testament, Apostles, Evangelists and founders of religious orders at the Certosa del Galluzzo con Pontormo, Florence, c1523 by Giovanni della Robbia.

tondo form is familiar to potters as the shape of a plate or shallow basin, appearing during the Italian Renaissance as polychrome *istoriata* and portrait maiolica plates that were often displayed on walls when not in use. These objects often had decorative borders on their rims of floral, vegetal images and geometric patterns surrounding the central narratives or portraits. Polychrome depictions of social gatherings on plates became common during the following centuries throughout Europe and Britain in handpainted, and eventually transfer-printed, overglaze enamels on Delftware, European hard-paste and soft-paste porcelain, Chinese porcelain, English earthenware and bone china: in other words, on all ceramic surfaces available in the industrial or cottage industry sectors. Floral borders on plates and shallow bowls were often applied to accentuate the rims, delineating the various structural elements of the object.[171] These ceramic vocabularies are still in wide use today in domestic spaces, and therefore would be a form familiar to viewers.

Figure 109: Roundel depicting Julia (?) Augustus & Agrippa, Giovanni della Robbia, 1520-25

[171] Relief plates and platters of the sixteenth-century French Huguenot ceramicist, Bernard Palissy with sculpted and/or cast land and sea creatures as well as various examples of vegetation also highlighted the fusion of plates, food, and sculpture, and were often displayed leaning against walls of display cases or mantels.

Figure 110: *Stemma of King René of Anjou*, Luca della Robbia, 1468-1475

In the twentieth century during the 1960s and 1970s several California ceramicists such as Robert Arneson and Viola Frey adopted the plate form to comment on contemporary social issues through glazed, incised, and sculpted images.[172] Twentieth-century, industrially produced souvenir plates served as a source for ceramic critique by the Funk ceramic movement, a form that Cicansky adopted. As a student in 1969 he exploited the souvenir plate as a carrier for Saskatchewan images contextualized within his own prairie experience, sculpting its surface and rim and imprinting words on its painterly glazed surface.[173] The theme of these relief tondos,

[172] See: Robert Arneson, *A Question of Measure,* 1978, glazed ceramic, 48.3 cm. (diameter) in Benezra, 1986, 57, fig. 61; Davira S. Taragin and Patterson Sims, *Bigger, Better, More: The Art of Viola Frey,* (New York and Mancester: Hudson Hills Press for the Racine Art Museum and Gardiner Museum, 2009), 62-63.
[173] *Saskatchewan Plate*, 1969, reproduced in Ferguson and Philips, 1983, 10. The image on the plate is a view of a road cutting through the prairie fields from the viewpoint of a driver looking through the front window of a car. It includes the car's dashboard and steering wheel, and impressed in clay on the rim is: "WOW! REAL GROOVY COUNTRY SASKATCHEWAN."

food preparation and consumption, parallel their common shape with plates, making material the cross-fertilization between functional ceramics and Renaissance ceramic reliefs integrated into architectural spaces. Such multiple references assure *The New Working Class* could appeal to a wide audience, whether art historically educated or not, and be situated within the history of the decorative arts.

While the polychrome della Robbia tondo frames followed vegetal and floral themes, *The New Working Class* polychrome tondo frames were specifically designed to reflect the various tasks in which the figures are involved in the central areas. In lower relief than the central sculptures and constructed as multiple units, they contrast with the visual complexity of the narrative scenes they surround. Cicansky's choice of yellow glaze references Saskatchewan's wheat fields,[174] once again grounding the murals in an agrarian reference. This reference to wheat fields builds on his framing strategy developed in *Regina, My World,* and emphasizes the experience of prairie living where many communities are surrounded by wheat fields. In these tondos the borders are comprised of sixteen repeated thematic sections of bagels and small breads (bakery), cucumbers or pickles (store clerk), envelopes (secretaries), work gloves (builders), and coffee cups (waitress). In each of the sections a yellow-glazed plug concealing the attachment rod has been carefully integrated into the design, as the centre of donuts, fasteners on envelopes, buttons on gloves, tips on saucers, and hidden amongst the cucumbers.

Figure 111 a: *The New Working Class* details "The Bakers"

[174] Victor Cicansky email to the author, 2 Nov. 2008.

Figure 111b: *The New Working Class* details, "The Clerk"

Figure 111c: *The New Working Class* details "The Waitress"

Figure 111d: *The New Working Class* details "The Builders"

Figure 111e: *The New Working Class* details" The Secretaries"

The New Working Class not only speaks to the histories of the decorative arts and ceramic sculpture, it also brings to mind kitsch, amateur and folk. This relationship is established partly because of the bright glossy glaze colours associated with ceramic hobbyists who use low-fire white earthenware clay and commercial glazes fired in electric kilns, rather than the harder to control gas kilns and high fired pottery. Cicansky glazed these murals with commercial glazes, but also applied china paints for finishing details, both techniques associated with women and amateurs, but here transposed into the professional and public realm.[175] Throughout the 1970s, Cicansky had explored these connections with kitsch and folk championed by Davis ceramicists who exploited them for their disruptive effects on art hierarchies. Bright glossy colours and glazes have not been associated with significant public figurative sculpture since the end of the della Robbia era, and even the colourful examples of English Coadestone of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century were not glazed but, rather, painted in oils and, until recently, these had not been maintained.[176] A reviewer of *The New Working Class* remarked in 1983 that the "bright coloured glazes of the scenes…seem indicative of the more complex world we live in

[175] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals, Interior Murals, Victor Cicansky, 1, " Box 5 5/16, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Cicansky, 2 Nov. 2008. During this time Judy Chicago was working on her massive Dinner Party Project in which she exploited the use of china paint to make a feminist statement about women's place in the hierarchy of Western art history, practices, and discourse. Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage,* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1979).
[176] Alison Kelly, "Coade Stone in Georgian Architecture," *Architectural History* 28, (1985): 71-101; Osiron Building Conservation, "George III: Grade 1 listed monument," accessed 10 March 2013, http://www.osirion.co.uk/st-george/st-george-2.html.

today,"[177] probably contrasting them with the monochrome terra cotta murals of *The Old Working Class* that were contextualized by Cicansky within the "simplicity…of the early immigrants and their work."[178] Cicansky has given two reasons for this colour choice: shortly after they were made in 1982 he connected them with the colours of house paint in the Garlic Flats when he was growing up, used by his neighbours as an artistic expression; more recently he explained these were the decorator tones in vogue at the time and found in homes of the working class.[179] Cicansky points out he subdued his palette for these public murals in contrast to his other ceramic art to please his clients, and the dark clay fulfilled this government-imposed aesthetic criteria.[180] The glazes of *The New Working Class* are high-keyed and very rich, an effect achieved by applying them to a darker clay body, rather than the white sculpture clay used by the California Funk movement at Davis that also aesthetically and symbolically referenced ceramic hobbyists.

The polychrome glazes of *The New Working Class* are similar to the palettes in work associated with folk art. They recall the peasant paintings of Bruegel the Elder. Like Bruegel, Cicansky used a limited colour palette, applying the glazes in large clear colour blocks that are related to individual forms. Bruegel used colour to minimally model his forms, and this type of paint application is also often seen in folk art paintings, such as those created by Cicansky's father's generation in Saskatchewan where the flatness of the support is accentuated, rather than the sculptural aspect of the figures. On folk sculpture, paint is also applied without modeling so that different forms are clearly delineated, and the more detailed carved or modelled surfaces are visible for their abstract sculptural, rather than painterly, qualities. Cicansky has used colour variation mainly in his skin tones to highlight the ceramic modeling, a not unexpected strategy as his figures are much larger than Bruegel's and therefore his faces and hands require more visual detail. Like Cicansky, Bruegel used a dark support to create tonal depth, raising the colours to a higher key with coloured oil glazes.[181] A contemporary of Cicansky, Kurelek also employed the same spatial and colour strategies used by Bruegel in his paintings. However, a key difference among their approaches lies in the disposition of the figures. We see both Kurelek's and

[177] Forde, 1983, 3.
[178] "Victor Cicansky," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980, 14.
[179] Forrest, 1982, 16; Cicansky, 1 Nov. 2008.
[180] Cicansky, 2 Nov. 2008.
[181] Roberts-Jones, 2002, 50.

Bruegel's small figures from a far, high vantage point and they become dwarfed by their representational space. In Cicansky's earlier 1980 tondos, such as *How the West Was Really Won* and *Celebration,* the large tondo space also dwarfed the figures, an effect seen as well in *The New Working Class* maquettes. However, in the final Sturdy-Stone tondos, Cicansky's figures are not dwarfed in their tondo space or their architectural setting, but instead command them.

While *The Old Working Class* has been mentioned in several texts and is included on Cicansky's own website, little has been said about *The New Working Class.* The SCC used coloured images of three of the tondos for the cover of their Annual Report 2008/09 that included the announcement of an upcoming exhibition celebrating the thirty-year anniversary of the Sturdy-Stone Centre. The context of these photos, taken by Gale Hagblom, then an employee of the SCC, attaches them to craft discourses and practices, despite the fact that Cicansky was not a member of the SCC when the murals were commissioned and made, or in 2008-09 when the publication and exhibition appeared. While there are strong historical connections between clay/ceramics and craft, and folk and craft, Cicansky's non-membership in the SCC indicates he distanced himself from craft as a discursive category for his work. He was, however, still involved in many aspects of ceramic practice, and in the late 1970s, sent photos to American educator, writer and ceramic artist, Glenn C. Nelson for inclusion in his 1978 book, *Ceramics: A Potter's Handbook*. Nelson had written a chapter on ceramic sculpture in which Cicansky's works were to be placed, but the editors deleted that chapter and redistributed the images,[182] an action that clearly indicates the struggle ceramic sculpture has been engaged in for legitimacy in discourse. Even into the twenty-first century it remains a fraught category.[183]

Twenty years later, Cicansky's ceramic sculpture was still not validated at the National Gallery of Canada where his agrarian themes, rendered in a style associated with folk art, impeded his acceptance at the Gallery, according to contemporary curator, Diana Nemiroff. She explained to Cicansky in 1997 the gallery had declined to collect his ceramic sculptures because his work was "bucolic" "occasionally humorous," a "rural or agrarian" voice emerging from the

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[182] Glenn C. Nelson letter to Victor Cicansky, 18 January 1978, Box 4, Correspondence 1978-1981, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

[183] Examples of essays that discuss this discursive "problem" are: Paul Mathieu, "But is it (Ceramic) Art? Ceramics and the 'Problem' with Jean-Pierre Larocque's Exhibition at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art," in *Craft: Perception and Practice: A Canadian Discourse*, Volume III*,* ed. Paula Gustafson, Nisse Gustafson and Amy Gogarty, (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Artichoke Publishing, 2007), 113-121; Tony Marsh, "Thoughts on Ceramic Sculpture," *Studio Potter* 34, no.1 (Dec. 2005): 39-41; Ian Anderson letter to the editor, "Ceramic Sculpture," *Studio Potter* 34, no.2 (June 2006): 7.

rural/urban split, and as mediums she privileged "photography, film and video" because of the "potential of these media to engage the viewer in a critical dialogue with his or her environment."[184] The implication is, of course, that Cicansky's clay sculptures, because of their artistic vocabulary, subject matter and material, do not involve the viewer in a critical dialogue. Such an evaluation had been applied two decades earlier to folk art, more often than not represented in academic discourse as "*speechless* (devoid of any complex, discursive messages in need of interpretation); as *non-problematic* (not fraught with the kind of tensions and drama we associated with creativity in the high arts); …and … *artless* (untouched by the formal aesthetic problems which must be confronted by the producers and critics of high art)."[185] Thus, while innovative voices (vernacular) using unconventional materials (ceramics) were being developed in regions remote from major art centres in North America, The National Gallery of Canada continued to dismiss these same voices as irrelevant, thus containing them as regional and inconsequential to the formation of the nation.

Part of the subversive nature of *The Old Working Class* is its ceramic material, unusual for figurative public sculpture in Canada, where stone had been used as the dominant material into the 1960s. However, terra cotta figures also appeared in other artistic vocabularies current at this time including art nouveau and modernist beaux-arts. In New York, projects using glazed terra cotta figures include Parkchester, a massive residential community in the Bronx c1942, where lively sculptures depicting members of the working and middle classes are mounted on red brick buildings.[186] Although these figures may be based upon actual people, they are displayed as generalized representations of the middle class rather than individuals. In the 1960s Raul Coronel, a California ceramicist, created a large, 7 ft x 5-7 ft. glazed ceramic low-relief polychrome mural depicting the history of medicine for the pharmaceutical company, Miles Laboratories, Indiana, where it was mounted in the interior of their brick clad building.[187] Cicansky's *The Old Working Class,* then, fits into an established history of the use of the figure

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[184] Diana Nemiroff letter to Victor Cicansky, 15 August 1997, Box 3 File National Gallery of Canada, Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-32, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[185] Johannes Fabian and Ilona Szombati-Fabian, "Folk Art from an Anthropological Perspective," in *Perspectives on American Folk Art,* ed. Ian M.G. Quimby and Scott T. Swank, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980), 290.
[186] Susan Tunick, *Terra Cotta Skyline,* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997): 116-117.
[187] Kevin Anzalone, "Raoul Coronel Mural Saved," Mid-Centuria, 25 Aug. 2011, accessed 14 March 2013, http://www.midcenturia.com/2011/08/raul-coronel-mural-to-be-saved.html. See also Stephanie Stang, "Miles Lab mural to be saved from demolition," *WNDU.COM,* 19 Aug., 2011, accessed 14 March, http://www.wndu.com/hometop/headlines/Miles_Lab_mural_to_be_saved_from_demolition_128098593.html.

in architecture that continued well into the twentieth-century in North America. While appropriate in the Beaux-Arts or even neo-classical context, or integrated into brick buildings such as Parkchester, high relief polychrome ceramic figurative murals were an incongruity in a brutalist building, such as the Sturdy-Stone Centre.

Figure 112: *The Potato* Picker, Victor Cicansky 1982

Cicansky continued to develop the themes and sculptural and glazing techniques he used in *The New Working Class,* although he has never had the opportunity to make large tondos as public art again. Successful smaller polychrome tondos such as *The Berry Picker*, *The Potato Picker* and *The Garden Angel*, 1982, celebrated contemporary gardeners and their vegetables and fruits grown, harvested and marketed on the prairies.[188] These were almost a meter in diameter, slightly smaller than *The Old Working Class*, and with lower relief appropriate for smaller spaces. The compositions of these murals with long tables and figures at the end are similar to the rectangular-shaped *Tea Time* and *Table Salad*, 1982. In July 1989, the Government of Saskatchewan commissioned one of these tondos from Cicansky as a gift to the Duke and Duchess of York. Cicansky also developed three-dimensional sculptures of people displaying

[188] Kerr, 2004, 11; slides 83, *The Potato Picker,* 1982 and slide 84 *The Garden Angel*, 1982, Victor Cicansky Fonds, 90-96, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

their produce that continue the theme of *The Old Working Class* into the mid-decade, but used contemporary figures and settings and glazed them in the glossy, high-keyed colours he used in *The New Working Class.* Examples of this series include *Heritage Seeds, Another Bumper Crop* and *Sprouting Potatoes,* all 1985, where humorously the figures and couch become one with the produce on their hybrid lap-cushions.[189] In 1984, Cicansky was awarded another large commission to create a ceramic relief mural, for the cafeteria in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's building in Regina.[190] *The Garden Fence*, sixty feet in length and nine feet in height is comprised of five hundred and forty tiles, a number chosen to match CBC Regina's number on the dial, 540.[191] This was the last public ceramic relief mural project executed by Cicansky who has now moved into integrating ceramic objects such as fruits and vegetables with bronze sculptures based on the garden. However, Cicansky's professional profile continued to be augmented by his public mural production and the works that developed from it. In the autumn of 1982 he gave a children's mural workshop for the Canadian Society for Education through Art conference in Regina, and the following year was the subject of a national travelling exhibition, *Victor Cicansky: Clay Sculpture* organized by the Mackenzie Art Gallery. *The New Working Class* and *The Old Working Class* afforded Cicansky recognition both provincially and nationally for a period of time, particularly when folk art was still on the radar of Canadian art historical discourse.

Conclusion

The Old Working Class and *The New Working Class* are at the nexus of a complex web of group formations that inform their visual style, material, content, process of making, and reception. Among these are California Funk ceramics from which arise representations of the working classes and their material culture, della Robbia ceramic Renaissance sculpture that has given architectural form to the theme, clay and glaze choices that offer philosophical as well as

[189] "Victor Cicansky - Saskatchewan Arts Board Collection," Belinda Harrow SAB email to the author, 8 July 2013. *Heritage Seeds,* clay, glaze, 50.0 cm. x 43.5 cm. x 30.0 cm., 1985, Gift of Saskatchewan Heritage 1985, 1985-303; Pegasus Gallery of Canadian Art, "Victor Cicansky," *Another Bumper Crop*, clay and glaze, 50.8 x 43.2 x4 8.3 cm., accessed 14 March 2013, http://pegasusgallery.ca/artist/Victor_Cicansky.html; *Sprouting Potatoes*, 1985 clay and glaze, 46 x 37 x 24 cm. in Christopher Zimmer, "Victor Cicansky," *New Canadian Sculptural Ceramics,* (Halifax N.C.: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1986).

[190] *The Garden Fence*, 1984, is glazed with a yellow fence, green vegetation and vegetables against a white background.

[191] Kerr, 1984, 62.

visual content, and contemporary art historical texts that help to situate the works for reviewers. These associations are enriched by discourses around multiculturalism, class and ethnicity that, combined with references to aesthetic discourses such as folk, grotesque and caricature, serve to rupture artistic, social and ultimately political and cultural boundaries. By tracing these mediators and group formations this chapter has described how Cicansky's murals were, and still are, part of a "grandiose project" of citizen participation in the articulation of provincial values and visions. Cicansky, the building, the government and what constituted the hybrid ceramic community provided the murals' material, form, colour, technique, iconography and location; however, the various publics that have encountered and interpreted them, shape their images using parameters of expectations for public art that have included class, gender, age and ethnic parameters. Early comments from the public influenced the artist's subsequent statements about the murals, when Cicansky inserted an autobiographical content that again modified their reception.

The form, structure, authorship and location of *The Old Working Class* and *The New Working Class* are irrevocably tied to their public space of contested citizenship. Cicansky's murals speak about a human and humane world. Miwon Kwon suggests "the artist's assimilation into a given community coincides with the art work's integration with the site." If the site-specific project is successful, it is because those who interact with it see themselves reflected positively through it, as community is built through the affirmation of self rather than confrontation and disturbance.[192] Cicansky is clear about how he regards public art: "Public art in contemporary society is a reminder of our values and who we are. It should be meaningful and accessible. It should enhance the visual landscape and stimulate the imagination of people in the communities where art is placed."[193]

The sheer size of the figures commands respect; we, like the boy Cicansky, look up at these complex dynamic people, warts and all. In a public space they are accessible to an audience some of whom are composed of descendants, friends and neighbours of these people. Art historian Joanna Woodall notes in national portrait galleries, "the communal body of the polity was historically constituted through images of the agents deemed responsible for the formation

[192] Miwon Kwon, *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity,* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 95.
[193] Ceramsky Artworks, "Cicansky: Commissions and Public Works," accessed 19 Feb. 2013, accessed 22 March 2013, http://www.cicansky.ca/commissions/index.htm.

and advance of a rich, distinctive national identity."[194] These Canadian faces unequivocally contribute to the body politic of Saskatchewan. Created at a time when multiculturalism was a nascent force in Saskatchewan and Canada, an inspirational ideal,[195] these murals are a reminder of the immigrant experience, as well as the processes of adoption and adaptation. The struggle for citizenship is embodied through the murals' materiality, visual ideology, and representation of three generations, and its reception.

The Old Working Class and *The New Working Class* draw their discursive power from their style and subject matter, which can be and is compared to other public figurative work. Indeed, as Bjørner Olsen points out: "Importance and significance are products of the difference between entities, rather than inherent qualities of the entities themselves."[196] Cicansky formed these murals by skilfully manipulating clay and tools, as well as images and ideals. The confluence of ethnicity, class, and a place for public art created a space where an encounter with the "unfamiliar" reveals what is taken for granted.[197] While style is an important element in the reception and function of this work, it cannot be divorced from qualities that slumber in the material, historically and physically, or how Cicansky interacted with them based on his own experiences with the medium and equipment. Contrary to what Nemiroff presumed about Cicansky's agrarian and regional concerns, while these murals were made for a specific Saskatchewan audience, they speak to larger issues of citizenship, blurring the categories of local and global. Literally and figuratively embedded into the political structures of the province, the social messages people read from the monumental murals *The Old Working Class* and *The New Working Class* continue to be available to the public, despite changes in political philosophies and governments.

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[194] Joanna Woodall, "Introduction," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 5.
[195] Sarah V. Wayland, "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and National Identity in Canada," *International Journal on Group Rights* 5, no. 1 (1997-98): 33-58.
[196] Brørner Olsen, *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects,* (Lanham Maryland; New York; Toronto; Plymouth, U.K.: Ultamira Press, 2010), 155.
[197] Ibid, 74.

CHAPTER 8

AN OFFICIAL PRESENCE: PRAIRIE THEMES, ROBERT BILLYARD

Introduction

The unity of ceramics as a decorative material for the Sturdy Stone Centre building is stressed when the viewer stands in the first floor lobby. At one side is Malach's mural *Untitled,* 1977; on the same level above the first floor elevators are Cicansky's five mural series *The Old Working Class;* and clearly visible on the second floor lobby, also above the elevators, are Robert Billyard's five shield-shaped murals, *Prairie Themes.* The placement, size, and lighting of *Prairie Themes* echo those of *The Old Working Class* below, establishing a visual symmetry that connects the two floors. The visitor taking the elevator from the first to the second floors, passes under the narrative and figurative *Old Working Class* "gargoyles" to exit from the elevator into the second floor lobby under *Prairie Themes,* murals comprising sculpted "prairie, forest, fish, flowers and birds…in a stylized, representational manner."[1] Writing for *Arts West* soon after the opening of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, a reviewer found them compelling: "powerful images surge forth… prairie lilies, fish, birds, looming boreal forests."[2] *Prairie Themes* is not signed, as Billyard decided authorship would be explained by the bronze plaque attached to the wall with his name, the title of the work and the year of installation, 1979. Billyard's decision indicates the committee that commissioned the murals had addressed the issue of appropriate labelling in the early stages of the project, and were determined to highlight the importance of the works.

The different opportunities to encounter these murals are specific to the second floor layout. This lobby is "T" shaped, the bottom of the "T" a glass wall that looks onto the first floor lobby, the stem accommodating the elevators, and the horizontal bar a hallway that allows access to the offices distributed around the exterior of the building. Because of the two-story ceiling of the entrance lobby and this resulting "T" configuration, people walking along the second floor hall only see the murals obliquely. Such a spatial configuration means the murals are primarily a point of focus for people arriving and departing that floor, rather than those who

[1] Robert Billyard quoted in Government Services, "Robert Billyard," in *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* (Regina: Government Services, 1980), 10; Peggy Forde, "Sturdy-Stone Murals: Abstract to Concrete," *Craft Factor* 8, no.3 (Summer 1983): 3.
[2] Ruth Wright Miller, "Saskatoon," *Arts West* 4, no.6 (Sept/Oct.1979), 10.

are travelling amongst the second floor offices. This visual engagement is therefore different from the murals on the eighth, ninth and tenth floors, where the elevator lobby is on a continuous hall that unites the east and west sides of the building. The second floor currently houses offices of the Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Corrections and Public Safety, and Ministry of Health Saskatoon Region, all regularly visited by clients.

Figure 113: *Prairie Themes* above second floor lobby elevators, view towards west doors

Besides the brief comments from the *Arts West* reviewer when the Sturdy-Stone Centre opened, there have been no textual traces of these murals left in the public realm. Therefore to speak to these murals I must pay attention to how they speak to me. This chapter explores the ways in which *Prairie Themes* reassure, provoke, inspire, entice, impose, cajole and intimidate through the various and shifting group formations in which they are involved. By closely attending to the formal aspects of these five murals, how and where they were made, and their history as part of the history of Robert Billyard, it is possible to follow the ideas, practices, and performances that transform them and us. In terms of Actor-Network-Theory's (ANT) sociology of associations, this series traces a network formation brought together because of opportunities

that emerged within a variety of shifting groups: some of these are spatial, architectural, material, technological or stylistic groups; whereas others are dependent upon educational, corporate and government assemblages. I follow the movements through which the murals co-shape their maker, the building, the visitors, the provincial government and the city, and the ways these shape the mural. I suggest they merge the geography/biosphere of Saskatchewan territory into political and judicial spaces that are constantly open for contestation. This account will address how the ensemble of physical qualities of the murals-in-formation and the mounted murals are involved in their various roles as actors. Specifically I address how these attributes emerged from a professional ceramic community to function as agents modifying this same community; and in a parallel manner speak to their materialization within a political environment and their contribution to the perception of government. Their form, colour, iconography and carefully considered dispositions perform a set of connections that, if we follow their maker, his gestures and studio technology lead geographically across North America, bringing together Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Mexico, California, and the Northwest Territories (now Nunavut). Temporally, if we follow their form and material, they extend this complex from the present day to the early twentieth-century. In each case while the murals look elsewhere and in other times, they bring those places and times into Saskatchewan of the late 1970s, reconfiguring those histories as much as those same histories made possible the murals. In such an account, an awareness of our bodies' sensory engagements with the murals, how we perceive and interact with their forms, iconography, colours, and placement, are also matters of concern. This approach is informed, of course, by an individual's personal and collective experiences. Taking the viewer's presence into account is not meant to privilege the human actor over non-human actor, but rather acknowledge it as one among many. In order to speak to these murals in these networks, we must, as Bjørnar Olsen suggests, "become sensate to the way things *articulate themselves* – and to our own somatic experience of listening to, and responding to, their call."[3]

[3] Bjørnar Olsen, "Scenes From a Troubled Engagement: Post-structuralism and Material Culture Studies," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands and Patricia Spyer, (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2006), 98.

An Official Presence

The Murals

Like each of the mural projects, this one is unique in form and content, with a configuration that introduces a new set of historical parameters. Each of the escutcheon-like murals is vertically symmetrical, with the exception of the central discs on which the individual specific themes are elaborated. As four of the five disc surfaces are concave, the sculptured flora and fauna emerge from this recessed area, spilling out over the disc's wide rim. Cast shadows from the spot lighting enhance the depth and drama of their forms. Each disc is framed on both sides with three long, pointed iron-green "leaves" that grow from a receptacle at the disc's base, and terminate at the top of the disc where smaller paired leaves form the base of a white "trumpet" flower resembling an "Indian Pipe" (monotropa uniflora), a wild prairie flower found in damp woods.[4] The tops of the "trumpet" flowers merge into the white, narrow, ridged frame that interfaces with the ceiling. Between the disc and the flower. and in the narrow space above the flower and ceiling, are rectangular tiles that radiate from the upper arc of the disc, each slightly pillowed in shape to give volume to the surface. In each of the five murals, these radiating rectangles are glazed either in neutral creams or blues and purples, suggesting daylight or night time, or perhaps a cloudy or clear sky. The murals' arrangement has been configured for thematic coherence of the disc sculptures whether viewed laterally or frontally. *Prairie Themes* is arranged so the "Prairie" mural, the only one with a convex surface on which the sculptural elements are applied, is centrally located above the middle elevator on the south wall; "Flower" and "Bird" flank "Prairie," and on the opposite wall "Tree" faces "Flower" and "Fish" faces "Bird." While the combination of each mural and its elevator clearly form a visual unit, this arrangement brings together the five as a coherent entity.

Introducing the Maker

Robert Billyard had not been included among the ceramicists initially approached by Ellemers and the SAB to present proposals for the commissions. Perhaps his reputation as a functional potter operating out of his Saskatoon studio, the Salt and Stone Company, had made

[4] Glen Lee, "Monitropa uniflora – photos and description (Indian-Pipe)," Saskatchewan Wildflowers, accessed 10 Aug. 2013, http://em.ca/garden/native/nat_Monotropa%20uniflora.html

him seem an unlikely candidate for such a sculptural project, or perhaps he was too far removed from the "Fort San" summer school crowd. In any case, Billyard heard about the mural commission opportunity "by word of mouth," and therefore took the initiative to contact Government Services, "who were running the show," with a request to be included. He remarked on the enthusiasm of this department, which was dealing with artists for the first time.[5] Billyard actually brought a wealth of sculptural clay experience to the project including familiarity with monumentality and mural making coupled with proven organizational skills in a variety of circumstances. In 1978, as someone committed to the professionalism of ceramics, he became the Saskatchewan CARFAC representative in Saskatoon, known as CARFAC North, and was closely involved with organizing the newly formed SCC. He worked diligently to establish CARFAC amidst a certain amount of apathy, and through both organizations had regular contact with James Ellemers of the SAB.[6]

Billyard's confidence about his ability to fulfill the commission rested on a decade of extensive experience in ceramics. A native of Saskatoon, he had pursued his post-secondary education at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, whose fine arts program was the first in Canada to offer ceramic courses as options towards a BFA in addition to a non-degree three-year program instituted in 1951.[7] He studied ceramics under Charlie Scott and painting under Donald Reichart earning his undergraduate degree in 1967.[8] Charlie Scott, an Alfred University graduate, organized the relocation of the University of Manitoba ceramics studio from its "cramped quarters on the third floor of the Old Law Courts Building in downtown Winnipeg" to a "commodious 7.5 x 15 metre studio on the Fort Garry campus." As an undergraduate in the mid-1960s, Billyard had been taught, "good pottery was in fact a form of abstract art" by Scott who specialized in high-fired functional stoneware, continuing the British Leach tradition begun by his predecessors at the school.[9] After completing his undergraduate studies, Billyard entered the MFA program at the Claremont Graduate School in California, 1968-69, under the

[5] Robert Billyard interview by the author, Mission B.C., 27 May 2011.
[6] Billyard recalls only a handful of artists were involved with CARFAC in Saskatoon at the time. Billyard, 27 May 2011; CARFAC Saskatchewan, "History," accessed 12 Aug. 2013, http://www.carfac.sk.ca/about-us/history
[7] Gail Crawford, *Studio Ceramics in Canada,* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Press and the Gardiner Museum of Ceramics, 2005), 157.
[8] Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[9] Crawford, 2005, 156-8. Crawford mentions Ronald T. Burke, Steve Repa, and Cecil Richards as these predecessors. Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.

supervision of Henry Takemoto.[10] Along with ceramic sculptors Paul Soldner and John Mason, Takemoto was a former student of Peter Voulkos at the Otis Art Institute and member of the influential California Clay Movement. Takemoto offered Billyard a more adventurous approach to clay, still related, however, to the fundamental concept that the vessel was, in fact, abstract art. The form of abstraction offered by Takemoto and the California Clay Movement involved deconstructing the function of the vessel, rather than purifying its functional form. In California, the Abstract Expressionist Clay movement drew from the gestural approach of the New York Abstract Expressionist painting school, enriching this with innovations to form and surface inspired by explorations in European ceramics such as in the work of Lucio Fontana, Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, and Juan Miro.[11] American ceramic historian, Garth Clark, described Takemoto's ceramics as "among the finest work of the so-called Abstract Expressionist School that revolved around Peter Voulkos."[12] In a much-reprinted 1961 article for the American Craft Council's publication *Craft Horizons*, craft critic Rose Slivka unequivocally championed the movement and included a half page photo of Takemoto and his vessels.[13] During Takemoto's tenure at Claremont, 1965-69, he approached ceramics from a dual perspective: while he treated the surfaces of his large pots like a canvas covering them with "energetic calligraphic drawing," he also worked as a designer for Interpace Corporation and Wedgwood.[14] Interpace was a ceramic company that had been formed by the fusion of the major architectural terra cotta company on the American west coast, Gladding, McBean with Lock Joint Pipe in 1962.[15] Billyard's choice of Takemoto as his MFA supervisor indicated his desire to explore this adventurous approach to ceramics, and his determination to engage in the latest technical and aesthetic developments with form and monumental expressions. Billyard studied large-scale sculpture, anthropology, and art history, and was particularly interested in Central and South American pre-contact ceramic sculpture.[16] This exposure to a ceramic and art histories, a wide

[10] "Robert Billyard," *Sturdy-Stone Artwork,* 1980, 10; Donald Reichart, email to the author 28 August, 2013; Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.
[11]Garth Clark, *American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present,* (London: Booth-Clibborn, 1987), 103.
[12] Garth Clark, "Takemoto, Henry (1930-)," in Clark, 1987, 302.
[13] Rose Slivka, "The New Ceramics Presence," *Craft Horizons,* (July/August 1961): 37.
[14] Clark, "Takemoto, Henry (1930-)," in Clark, 1987, 302; "Henry Takemoto," in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnston, Paul J. Karlstrom, and Sharon Spain, (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2008), 429.
[15] Gary F. Kurutz, "Shapes of Clay," in *Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding, McBean,* Gary F. Kurutz and Mary Swisher, (Sausalito California: Windgate Press, 1989), 131.
[16] Billyard, 27 May 2011

range of mid-twentieth century aesthetics, and ceramic practices ranging from avant-garde sculpture, architectural terra cotta, industrial design and studio pottery production prepared Billyard for a number of eventualities in his ceramic career. He became well versed in the gestures, materials, and tools of making associated with abstract expressionist clay, fine pottery, and representational sculpture.

Figure 114: Henry Takemoto working on his glazed tile mural at Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, 1959

Despite his enthusiasm for this post graduate experience, Billyard did not finish his final MFA ceramics project at Claremont, accepting instead a Canadian job offered by the Government of the Northwest Territories to head the arts and crafts portfolio.[17] Recommended by Inuit art authority George Swinton,[18] who he had known as a professor at the University of Manitoba's art school, Billyard replaced Claude Grenier. Grenier had famously introduced and managed the ceramics project in Rankin Inlet, *Kangiqliniq*, 1963-1970, preparing the ceramicists for shows in southern Canada that were well received. The aim of this program was to develop ceramic skills amongst the Inuit so they could produce a body of work marketable in southern Canada to supplement their income. While this history is well documented elsewhere, it should be noted that Charlie Scott had been briefly brought into the Rankin Inlet ceramics project in

[17] Billyard, 27 May 2011
[18] George Swinton Fonds, "Biographical Sketch," University of Manitoba Libraries, accessed 20 Aug. 2013, http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/collections/rad/swinton.html.

1965 as a glaze expert to deal with the challenge of developing colour within the work without obscuring the fine surface detail of the sculpted pots.[19] Scott had recommended salt glazing, which Billyard introduced during his time there, 1970-1973. Billyard also conducted experiments in raku firing and high fire celadon and iron saturated glazes. Other Billyard innovations involved the mixing of the stoneware clay from bags of dry clay, grog, silica, and feldspar especially brought into the community, rather than using the low-fire local clays that had been favoured a few years earlier. This expanded the firing range of the productions, putting them more in line with what was being produced in southern Canadian pottery studios where high-fire techniques and reduction effects were privileged. He was not only instrumental in developing more appropriate glazing options in *Kangiqliniq*, but also worked with the Inuit ceramicists to establish standards and to refine sculptural techniques integrated into the vessel forms.[20] One of Billyard's first projects was to have the artists design and make a ceramic mural that was mounted on the exterior wall of the craft shop.[21] The range of the ceramic products and technical innovations produced in *Kangiqliniq* echoed his own education, inspiring Canadian ceramic historian Crawford to claim Billyard's tenure "marked the studio's finest hour."[22] A perennial lack of understanding and support from federal government officials and financial woes of the Government of the Northwest Territories eventually contributed to marketing problems in southern Canada for the ceramics. Although by 1973 the project had been assured of some continued financial support from the territories government, Billyard decided to resign in order to establish his own ceramic studio, The Salt and Stone Company, in a warehouse on the outskirts of Saskatoon.[23]

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[19] Cynthia Cook, "The Question of Authenticity: The Rise and Fall of the Rankin Inlet Project; La Question d'authenticité: Grandeurs et misères du projet Rankin Inlet," in *A Question of Identity: Ceramics at the End of the Twentieth Century, The International Academy of Ceramics, 1998,* ed. Ann Roberts, (Waterloo Ont.: The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, 1998), 59-64; Stacey Neal, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics, Part One: A Study in Development and Influence," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 14, no.1 (1999): 5-22; Stacey Neal, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics, The Quest for Authenticity and Market Share," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 14, no.2 (1999**)**: 7-17.

[20] Stacey Neal, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics, The Quest for Authenticity and Market Share," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 14, no.2 (1999): 14.

[21] Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.

[22] Crawford, 2005, 263-266. The studio was taken over by local ceramicist Michael Kusugak, who also ran into financial trouble and had to close it. In 1979 James Shirley from New York became the new arts and crafts officer and currently runs The Matchbox Gallery in Rankin Inlet (Kangiqliniq). See as well Matchbox Gallery: The Kangirqlinik Centre for Arts and Learning, "The Matchbox Gallery," accessed 4 Feb. 2014, http://www.matchboxgallery.com/MatchboxGallery.html

[23] Crawford, 2005, 263; Billyard, 27 May 2011; Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013; Stacey Neal, "Rankin Inlet Ceramics, The Quest for Authenticity and Market Share," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 14, no.2 (1999**)**: 14-15.

In Saskatoon, Billyard concentrated mainly on commercial projects through which he could earn a living in a medium size prairie city, a challenge for any ceramicist. He therefore focussed on high-fire functional wares along with some animal sculptures and tile work he integrated into tables or displayed as groupings in wall murals. To survive he marketed his work vigorously, advertising through street flyers and local radio ads for his Christmas exhibitions, as well as exhibiting in retail outlets that included in Saskatoon, the Mendel Art Gallery, Gallery One, the cooperative Shoestring Gallery, and in Regina, the Assiniboia Gallery. Billyard's technical knowledge was extensive. Using dried clay obtained from the local Plainsman Clay distributor, he formulated his own clay bodies as required for specific projects, and built a four-burner natural gas car kiln. Because he was also employed by the University of Saskatoon as an off campus instructor, he was able to acquire a slab roller that he could use for his own production.[24] Among his interests was Saskatchewan wildlife that he sculpted in stoneware, incorporating fish, animals, and birds as handles of vessels or onto the sides of pots that had been altered with organic deformations.[25] A series of small musk ox and buffalo sculptures based on the University of Saskatchewan herds associated with their forestry program also first appeared at this time. These creatures were all meticulously rendered, and resulted from careful observation and patient sculpting. Billyard was adept with a variety of production techniques including slab work, hand building, slip casting, wheel throwing and press and slump moulding. Several of these proved indispensable for his mural project. In his sculptural ceramic work and fusion of the vessel and sculptural forms he was particularly inspired by the pre-contact sculptural ceramics of the First Nations of Central and South America he had encountered at Otis, as well as the organic architectural forms of Antonio Gaudí.[26] Eclectic sources and styles found their way into his functional and tile works.

[24] Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[25] Robert Billyard archives, artist collection, Mission B.C.
[26] Billyard, 27 May 2011; Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals: Interior Murals: Robert Billyard,1," Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly,* Box 5 2005-53, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

Figure 115: Robert Billyard Salt and Stone Company production c. 1977

Emblems and Shields

The escutcheon shape of each of the murals that comprise the collective *Prairie Themes* corresponds to terra cotta shields, cartouches, and discs incorporated as decoration on a variety of beaux-arts style buildings throughout North America. In many of these moulded white, iron red, or colourfully glazed terra cottas, an arabesque of highly sculptured foliage and flowers surround a central disc or oval that was often the site of equally elaborate sculpted figures, animals or flowers. Acting as a framing device, the foliage habitually appeared to grow from a narrow sculpted base, resembling the receptacle of a flower, on which the disc, cartouche, or shield was balanced. Examples of such terra cottas executed by the American terra cotta company, Gladding, McBean are found throughout California and up the west coast of North

America, including Victoria and Vancouver.[27] On the east coast of the United States the dominant architectural terra cotta company was The Atlantic Terra Cotta Company, and in the American Midwest, the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company in Chicago.[28] As modern architecture came to dominate, demand for terra cottas declined and the companies were forced to close their doors. Billyard's experiences in California would have made him aware of multiple examples and wide applications of architectural terra cottas.

Figure 116a: *Prairie Themes*

Figure 116b: *Prairie Themes*

[27] Kurutz, 1989, 14, 130.

[28] Alexander Architectural Archive, "Atlantic Terra Cotta Company: An Inventory of its Architectural records and Photographs 1914-1941," Texas Archival Resources Online, University of Texas Archives, accessed 11 Dec. 2012, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00038/aaa-00038.html; Mark R. Wilson, Stephen R. Porter and Janice L. Reiff. "Northwestern Terra Cotta Co.," Encyclopedia of Chicago, accessed 10 Dec. 2012, http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/2797.html.

Figure 116c:
Prairie Themes

Figure 116d:
Prairie Themes

Figure 116e:
Prairie Themes

Terra cotta cartouche or escutcheon reliefs, created during the early twentieth-century heyday of terra cotta decoration, are also seen in Saskatoon, albeit expressed in a much more restrained style. On the Standard Trusts Building (Norfolk Trust Building), four white terra cotta cartouches had been situated above the fifth floor on the columns between the windows.[29] A similar arrangement of six white terra cotta escutcheons can still be seen above the seventh floor on the columns between the windows of the 1913 Canada Building, located in Saskatoon's Central Business District, and a highly decorated Saskatchewan shield is still mounted above the door of the 1909 Saskatoon Land Titles Office built by the provincial government and now a

[29] Popular Searches of the Local History Collections Database, Standard Trusts Building, "Exterior Shot of Standard Trusts Building, ID Number LH 1057," Saskatoon Public Library, accessed 20 Oct. 2012, http://spldatabase.saskatoonlibrary.ca/ics-wpd/exec/icswppro.dll?AC=QBE_QUERY&TN=LHR_RAD&NP=4&QB0=AND&QF0=CLASSIFICATION&QI0=STANDARD+TRUSTS&QB1=OR&QF1=SUBJECT&QI1=STANDARD+TRUSTS+BUILDING&MR=20&RF=www_Canned%20Searches&QB2=AND&QF2=THUMBNAIL_IMAGE&QI2=*.

Saskatoon heritage building.[30] As much as modernist buildings create links to international architectural trends, so too did those beaux arts edifices built during the early twentieth century decorated with terra cotta and faced with brick and stone. *Prairie Themes,* draws upon this tradition of decorative terra cotta in the assemblage of its composite forms, the use of a curved surface for the cartouche, and reliance upon the foliage scroll as imagery. This series of five murals recognizes the contributions of terra cotta architectural decorations to the history of the city, a style rejected by modernist architects. Such recognizance was especially important as it was precisely the buildings from that era that were being threatened with demolition or already destroyed during the frenzy of mid twentieth-century Saskatoon urban renewal. The Standard Trusts Building, destroyed to make way for the Sturdy-Stone Centre, is a key example. While some of the historical architectural terra cotta had been especially created for particular buildings based on actual drawings from architects, other projects were developed by in-house designers and sculptors according to an architect or client's directions. More commonly, generic terra cottas were designed and produced within the manufactories to be widely marketed for less expensive buildings. The majority of terra cottas in the downtown sector of the city appear to be the latter. Billyard's terra cottas, however, were designed and made specifically for the Sturdy-Stone Centre without direction from the architects. This was an ideological shift that testifies to the loss of a decorative vocabulary in the wake of the dominance of Brutalism and International Modernism. The manufacture of *Prairie Themes* within a studio setting by a potter/ceramicist testifies to the decline of the decorative terra cotta industry in the post war years, and the shift from an industrially manufactured product to one controlled by the ceramic artist throughout the process, acting as designer, maker, and technician.

[30] Heritage Properties, City of Saskatoon, "Land Titles Office," accessed 1 Dec. 2013, http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/PlanningDevelopment/DevelopmentReview/HeritageConservation/HeritageProperties/Pages/LandTitlesOffice.aspx.

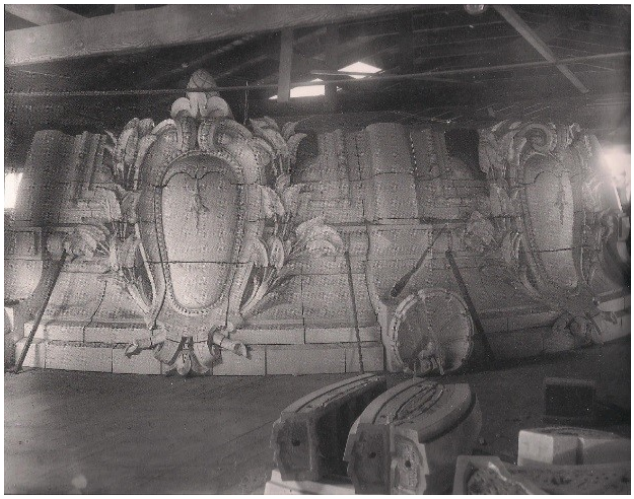

Figure 117: Base of Dome, Pantages Theater, Los Angeles, 1919, terra cotta, Gladding McBean

Figure 118: Standard Trusts terra cotta shields

Figure 119: Land Titles Office

If the form of the murals makes definite architectural references, the iconography of *Prairie Themes* clearly recalls the "natural" habitat of Saskatchewan, performing the requirement of the commission mandate to represent Saskatchewan. Because these murals were specifically created for a particular space, especially one as political as the Sturdy-Stone Centre, an expectation of some kind of symbolic representation would be natural. Details in Billyard's murals challenge us to identify explicit flora and fauna: the flowers, lilies; the trees, a spruce grove; the bird, a horned owl; and the fish perhaps a walleye, a Saskatchewan native. Their incorporation within the escutcheon form in a government building strongly suggests they are emblematic, rather than decorative as might be expected in a commercial or less symbolic building. However, whether they can be directly related to provincial nature emblems is not clear. While the Western Red Lily was adopted as Saskatchewan's floral emblem in 1941, the lilies depicted here are white; however, this colour discrepancy may have been because of the lack of a reliable high temperature red stain or glaze, or an aesthetic choice for the murals' muted colour scheme. In fact an earlier version did include red lilies, but this was modified before the final mural. The Horned Owl is native to Saskatchewan, but not its bird emblem, which since 1945 has been a game bird, the Prairie Grouse; in fact, the Horned Owl was adopted as Alberta's bird symbol in 1977.[31] Spruce groves, among other coniferous trees, are found throughout the northern sections of the province; however, the provincial tree emblem is the white birch adopted in 1988, a decade after the murals were made.[32] The fish may well be the walleye, a species prevalent in Saskatchewan and designated as fish emblem by popular vote in 2005, almost three decades after the completion of these murals.[33] "Prairie," reminiscent of many prairie paintings, comprising a deep perspective of farmed fields, coulees and big sky, is based on a low aerial view of southern Saskatchewan's cultivated fields, lakes, and shelter belts, with undulating hills stretching into the distance. This aerial view of the prairies is highly representational, as opposed to the abstract patterns involved in the exterior Hardy-Woolsey and Sures murals, and is stylistically in line with the more representational vocabulary employed throughout the interior

[31] Alberta Culture, "Emblems of Alberta," accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://culture.alberta.ca/about/emblems/.
[32] Saskatchewan, "Emblems of Nature," Government of Saskatchewan Intergovernmental Affaires, accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://www.ops.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=04b94b5e-e001-4d29-a31a-92a71c7bc305.
[33] Saskatchewan, "Walleye Wins Vote for Saskatchewan's Fish Emblem," Government of Saskatchewan, About Government News Releases September 2005, accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=441487f4-810a-443d-aad9-199c0bffec5d.

murals. The depiction of prairie fields stretching to the horizon achieved using a deep recession on a limited surface is characteristic of much prairie art. It is seen in the work of folk artists who painted similar scenes from a viewpoint of standing on a path, dirt road or in a field, and evident as well in Victor Cicansky's late 1960s plates that represented this view from a car window travelling down a road. Billyard's prairie perspective differs, however, from all of these. His is a view from a low-flying plane, an increasingly common experience in the 1970s whether due to activities such as crop dusting, local short flights, recreational flying, traveling to remote settlements, or inter provincial or intercontinental travel on larger airplanes. The aerial view is one that suggests efficient and speedy connections to remote places. Whether understood as managing the land, coming home, or leaving, "Prairie" normalizes the vision of an increasingly mobile population linked through air travel with cosmopolitan centres and global practices. It publicizes Saskatchewan and its people as linked to the larger world through equipment, technology, and speed.

Figure 120a: *Prairie Themes* detail Figure 120b: *Prairie Themes* detail Above Elevators on North Wall

Figure 120c: *Prairie Themes* detail

Figure 120d: *Prairie Themes* detail

Figure 120e: *Prairie Themes* detail
Above Elevators on South Wall

Strategies of Making

Billyard spent months developing this project from his initial proposition to the completed work. After he succeeded in being considered for the commissions, he proposed two mural projects on the first and second floors of the Sturdy-Stone Centre, a total of ten murals in all. Billyard quickly eliminated the possibility of submitting a proposal for the exterior murals, as he considered "the logistical problems were enormous," including space and manpower.[34] One of his earliest decisions was to use the materials and equipment with which he was most familiar and already had at his disposal, high-fired stoneware clay, slips and glazes, his slab roller, forming techniques with which he was already familiar, and his reliable four-burner natural gas car kiln. Natural gas was an economic fuel source that had become available in Saskatoon in 1953 after SaskPower installed transmission lines from the Lloydminster fields, but equally important, it was easier to control than oil. [35] While this was initially a business decision to eliminate loss and maximize profit, Billyard's choice would have an important affect on the aesthetics of the murals.

His initial submissions to the Sturdy-Stone were pencil crayon drawings, but he then proceeded to work on two series of maquettes, rather than one, a decision that indicates his cautious approach to this important commission. The first was one-quarter size and the second two-thirds size, as he developed his idea from tiles to more complex surfaces because he "wanted to open up the design a bit."[36] One of the striking aspects of *Prairie Themes* is the assemblage of complex shapes to make five identical forms. The design comprises three main types of shapes and surfaces that could be detached from each other for ease in handling: the sculpted vegetation, the central disc, and the individually shaped "pillow" tiles. During the maquette stage, Billyard experimented with a variety of forms for each of these three components. For instance, he originally worked with different sizes of the radiating tiles, before resolving to keep them relatively uniform, eventually in the final works cutting seventy individual tiles for each mural.[37]

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[34] Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[35] Brad McKenzie, "Oil and Gas," Western Development Museum –Winning the Prairie Gamble Exhibit, 2003 9. 9, 11, accessed 15 Oct. 2013, www.wdm.ca/.../Oil%20and%20Gas%20by%20Brad%20McKenzie.pdf.
[36] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals: Interior Murals: Robert Billyard, 1," Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly,* Box 5 2005-53, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[37] Robert Billyard studio photos, Robert Billyard archives, private collection.

For the vegetation, he used extruded coils that were finally considerably altered by hand for the final work. He also experimented extensively with configurations for the central disc.

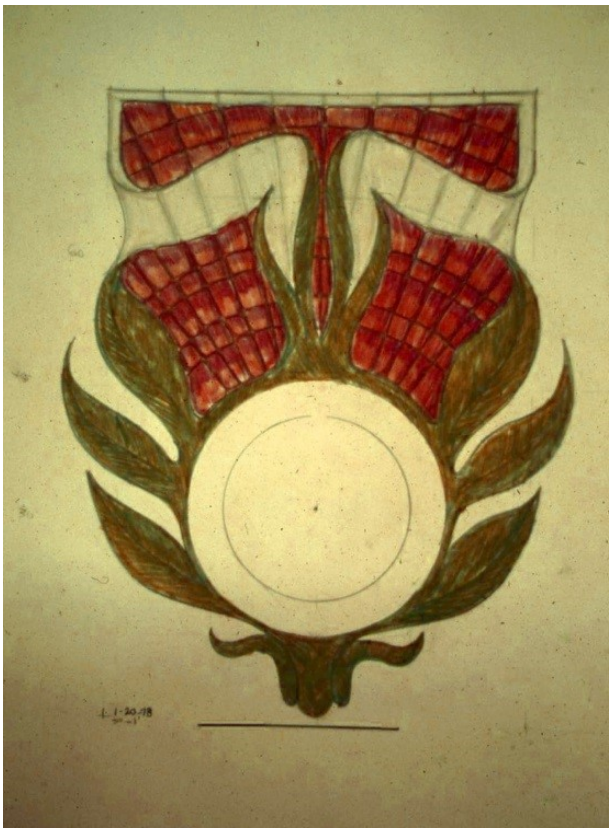

Figure 121: Scale drawing for mural for Sturdy Stone centre, Robert Billyard, c1976

The discs proved to be the most challenging aspect of this project, despite Billyard's previous experiments with deconstructing and reconstructing plate forms. For one thing, he could only work on a flat horizontal surface and therefore lacked the audience perspective. Another challenge lay in their monumentality, bigger than any previous plate projects and more complex in their sculptural components. While his sculptured plates had stood as one-off objects, here the sculptured "plates" were integrated into a variety of very different forms. The approach he developed manifests the incremental steps in his experimentation as he solved a multitude of problems, reflecting what Ingold has pointed out is improvisation resulting from process rather than historical rupture. He transferred and adapted familiar gestures and techniques involved in manipulating several pounds of clay to form his large plates that he decorated through cutting, incising patterns, and attaching sculptured additions. Like Cicansky, Billyard had been exposed

through his California studies to new approaches in the plate form that moved it into the realm of wall sculpture. In 1977, he was both painting prairie landscapes with glazes and engobes on the concave surface of his stoneware plates, and cutting and sculpting plates to receive fish sculptures, often slipcast, that swam across the concave surfaces. These plate surfaces were also altered with scratches into the slip or clay and with rhythmic additions of slip, textured like rippled water. With diameters ranging between twenty to twenty-four inches, Billyard designed these series of plates to be hung on walls, and in keeping with this the rims of the plates became their frames.[38] In particular their large sizes were a technical feat because of the risk of breakage or warpage in the high temperature gas stoneware firing[39] with its inherent fluctuations in temperature, especially from the shifting oxidation/reduction atmospheres required for the subtle glaze effects. Their final destination as wall "art" rather than functional "craft" or abstract vessels promoted the importance of his aesthetic and technical accomplishments.[40] Moving from the table to the wall was a strategy that reflected the prejudices of the hierarchy of craft and art.

For the murals, adaptations were made taking into account the transition of the plates from domestic wall work to discs for public wall work. The concave and convex surfaces with which Billyard was working imposed particular design challenges regarding the manipulation of sculptural and painted images across their curvatures: the images had to be easily understood and prominent to the viewers who were looking up at them. In particular the problems of anamorphism had to be addressed. The concave surfaces solved a structural problem related to the attachment of the image that would have been distorted by the convex curvature.[41] In architectural terra cotta with similar shapes, the complex sculptures always are attached to a concave surface, with the convex ones left relatively unadorned. One key consideration would have been the great depth of the relief surface if the sculptured forms were to be attached to convex surfaces. Images of some of the maquettes, one quarter of the final size, indicate that originally all five discs had a central recessed area framed by the plate's rim. However, for the realized mural, "Prairie," the concave surface became convex, presumably as it better reflected the curvature of the earth, more appropriate for the aerial view depicted. For that particular disc,

[38] Robert Billyard archives, private collection; Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.
[39] Claire Watrall, "Sturdy Stone Murals: Interior Murals: Robert Billyard,1," Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly,* Box 5 2005-53, Victor Cicansky Fonds, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.
[40] The art historical associations of the plate on the wall have been traced in previous chapters. See especially Chapter 7.
[41] Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.

the prominent sculptured white clouds counteract the receding curve of the sky and the additions of relief coulees stabilize the horizon line that otherwise threatened to drop off the side of the curved surface. The diameters of these discs, intended to be fired in one piece, were calculated to just fit through the door of Billyard's car kiln. [42] This parameter became an important feature in deciding the other design elements that would encircle the disc, as these additions had to complete the width of the elevator door and the required height between the top of the doors and the ceiling Therefore, the car kiln door, made for a functional stoneware production, became a crucial limiting factor in some aspects of the design, but also one that encouraged improvisation.

Figure 122a: Maquette "Trees"

Figure 122b: Maquette Fish"

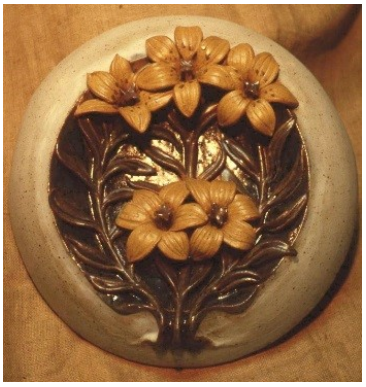

Figure 122c: Maquette "Lilies"

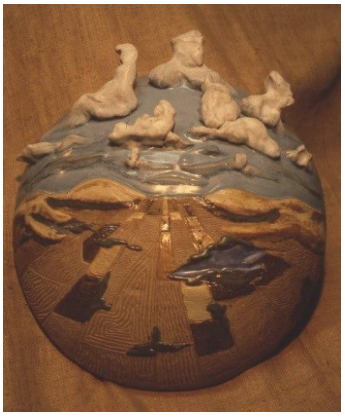

Figure 122d: Maquette "Prairie"

Figure 122e: Maquette "Owl"

[42] Billyard, 27 May 2011

Figure 123: maquette for "Prairie" with concave surface

Once Billyard had finalized his ideas in the maquette, he drew the mural form on a large table taking into consideration the shrinkage of his stoneware clay. This sculptural clay was especially heavily textured with the addition of extra grog, a modification for large-scale sculpture developed by the Otis Art Institute clay sculptors and the California Clay movement.[43] For the discs he designed and built a jig, and from a large section of clay made his original form that was then cast in plaster. This plaster mould served as the basis of the first disc to be made, the convex "Prairie." Clay for the discs was formed using the slab roller, and Billyard reports during this project he became particularly aware of the importance of compressing the clay to reduce shrinkage and cracking. The surface of the leatherhard clay was imprinted and carved and the sculptural additions applied. To form the other four discs with concave centres, Billyard cut the circular centre of the mould and inverted it, and into this placed the slabs for each of the

[43] Large scale ceramic sculptural works in the California abstract expressionist style that involved sculptural bodies were executed throughout 1950s-1970s by people such as Peter Voulkos, John Mason, Harold Paris, and Stephen de Staebler. Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 43-52; Clark, 1987, 117-170.

succeeding discs, in the order of Flower, Trees, Owl and Fish. With the sculptural forms attached, the final three-dimensional depth of these discs was similar to that of "Prairie." "Owl," the most challenging as it required considerable reinforcement because of its volume, was remade three times before it was successfully fired. Billyard hand built the sculptures for the discs, using the coiling method for the fish; for the trunks, stems, and petals he pulled the clay with an elephant ear sponge, as a potter pulls handles for pots; and the leaf shapes that flank the discs were all hand built individually. [44] These techniques, executed on a large scale, resulted in very organic forms, each one unique. While these multiple forms could have been moulded or extruded to appear exactly alike from one mural to the other, as would be the case in industrial production, by creating them individually Billyard referred back to the traditional processes of functional pottery, linking sculpture, architecture and craft. Paradoxically, Billyard's hand building processes that resulted in variations from mural to mural clearly signalled their studio origins, distancing them from historical terra cotta manufacturing.

Figure 124: Billyard assembling "Prairie" after bisque firing c1977
Note studies for the murals on the wall

[44] Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013; Claire Watrall, Sturdy Stone Murals: Interior Murals: Robert Billyard, 1, Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly*, 5/16 Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections; Billyard, 27 May 2011

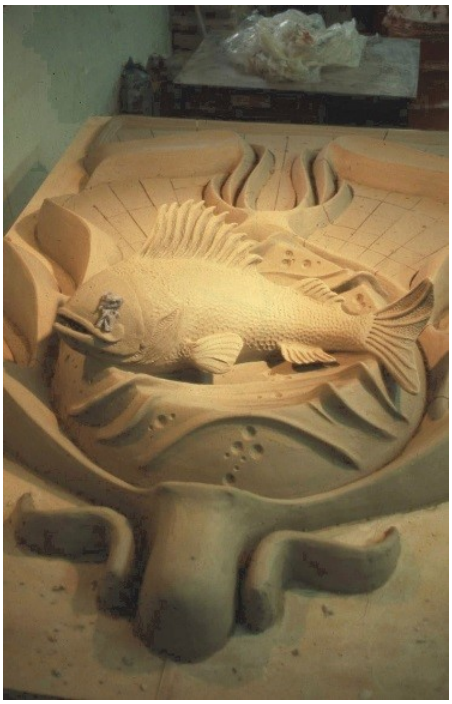

Figure 125: Fish mural before bisque firing, 1977

Billyard's working methods required a constant flow of decisions as he evaluated each movement in light of how the clay and later the engobes and kiln responded. Once the clay was leatherhard it could be cut into sections, and engobes could be applied in preparation for glazing and firing. The sectioning of the mural was based upon design coherence taking into consideration shapes and sizes that would dry evenly and could be reliably fired to high temperatures without distortions or cracking. White engobe was applied on the surfaces of the murals where a colour lighter than the darker stoneware was required.[45] Light-coloured frames for the interior disc sculptures created a contrast with the darker framing foliage and this especially enhanced the view of the murals from an oblique angle. This was an important decision as it lightened the mass of the mural, ensuring its strong sculptural forms that extended out from the surface would not be too overbearing. After the bisque firing Billyard applied glazes, which he found had been dependable from previous work with his functional ware and small sculptures. While he had established a special glazing room in his studio and regularly carried out glaze testing, reliable glazes were rare and each required particular application

[45] Billyard, 27 May 2011. Engobes are underglazes that can be applied to clay at any stage. Compositionally they usually contain little plastic clay and are more similar to glazes that are slips. They can be subsequently covered with a glaze, although this is not always necessary depending on the effect desired.

techniques.[46] One key consideration was compatibility among the clay body, the engobe, and the glazes, made more complex by the curved surfaces that affected the structural tensions among these different layers; cracking or surface separation was an ongoing concern.

The glaze colours of these murals reflect what is expected in high-fired stoneware clay. Whites, ochres, cobalt blues, copper and cobalt purples, and iron browns and greens were formulated by mixing a variety of oxides in several glazes applied either over the white engobe or directly onto the darker stoneware. The lively variety in the small radiating blue toned sky tiles is indicative of the tone variations inherent through a combination of two colouring oxides in a glaze that has been carefully reduced in the firing. Optimal colour and texture development of each of the glazes was a great concern, and any flaws would mean the remaking of the whole mural. This required control of temperature and oxygen/gas ratios and prior knowledge of how these circulated in the kiln depending on the load distribution. Consequently Billyard placed the mural tiles in precise locations. Familiarity with his kiln, reached only through regular firings, allowed him to achieve reliable results, despite the complex shapes, sizes and colours involved. This knowledge paid off, as all the tiles emerged from the glaze firings aesthetically and structurally successful. Each mural demanded six weeks of Billyard's full attention, from the making of each slab to the reforming of the tiles on the table after the glaze firing.[47] Once finished, the murals were carefully packed away until the building was completed and Ketler mounted them onto the walls.

When Billyard laid out the murals on the lobby floor for Ketler to evaluate the mounting situation, Ketler immediately realized what his challenge would be. He faced a support problem as the large heavy disc had been made as a single piece, unlike the della Robbia tondos that were sectioned and that had informed Cicansky's tondos. Ketler's normal solution of galvanized tin strips and bonding grout would not be adequate, and he too had to improvise, inventing a hidden "support brace" that would compensate for the extra weight.[48] This innovation apparently has been effective as the murals are secure after more than thirty years. However, such a problem could have been avoided with better communication among the masons, ceramicists, architects, and government.

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[46] Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Claire Watrall, Sturdy Stone Murals: Interior Murals: The Installation, 2, Unpublished Manuscript submitted to *Ceramics Monthly*, 5/16 Victor Cicansky Fonds 2005-53, University of Regina Archives and Special Collections.

Figure 126: Jake Ketler and unnamed assistant mounting Billyard's
Prairie Themes over the south wall elevators, 1979.
Applied finish had to be removed from the wall in order to install the murals

The Escutcheon in Government Spaces

The configuration of the murals has strong historical antecedents that carry ideological weight impossible for its audience to ignore. The identical forms of these five murals refer particularly to the escutcheons of heraldry found on shields of arms and incorporated into British, European, and Canadian coats of arms. These recall European armorial traditions and political power structures that were adopted by the Canadian national and provincial governments based on European institutional models.[49] Only one of Canada's political territories has spurned this shape for their shield-of-arms: upon its creation as a political entity separate from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, a self-governing Inuit territory, adopted a circular shape in 1999 that was in line with Inuit cultural values. The form of *Prairie Themes*, highlighted by spot lighting, speaks to the exercise of power in Saskatchewan through Euro-Canadian, or

[49] Nunavut Maligaliurvia, Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, Assemblée Législative du Nunavut, "The Coat of Arms of Nunavut," accessed 5 Aug. 2013, http://www.assembly.nu.ca/about-legislative-assembly/coat-arms-nunavut; Dwane Wilkin, "Nunavut's flag, coat-of-arms a product of long deliberation," *Nunatsiak News*, April 8 1999, accessed 5 Aug. 2013, http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/nunavut990427/nvt90409_07.html.

more specifically British-Canadian institutions, an association regularly enforced throughout the twentieth-century by incorporating this kind of architectural decoration in government buildings.[50] Moreover, this sense of institutional power is communicated through the murals' pronounced relief surfaces and diameter: with a four-foot width, they cover the wall surface from the top of the elevators to the ceiling, almost the height of a human. The murals' serial form that repeats the escutcheon five times proclaims the authority of governance. While the provincial shield is usually only represented once in an architectural space, in this case several have been installed, a strategy usually reserved to present or document a political collective assembled over time and/or space. Indeed, such assemblages are evident in the carved stone shields in the rotunda of the Canadian Parliament Building in Ottawa whose iconography spans centuries of human culture in Canada, and in the carved wooden coats of arms of the provinces in the Library of Parliament. In these cases a time span or geographical/political unit is created through their repetition. In the Sturdy-Stone Centre, the repetition of the escutcheon shape over five murals, each with their individual imagery, leaves the viewer with the impression of a powerful, sanctioned collective, one embedded within the natural resources of the province.

Figure 127: Parliament Rotunda, Parliament Hill, Ottawa.
Shields are located between the arches

[50] *Regina Leader,* April 2, 1908, 3 quoted by Diana L. Bodnar, "The Prairie Legislative Buildings," in *Prairie Architecture: A Special Issue of Prairie Forum* 5, no. 2, ed. Trevor Boddy, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre), 150. Architectural historian Bodnar points out that architects who competed for the Saskatchewan Legislative Building commission were reminded that the "province is politically within the British Empire." The Saskatchewan legislative building was built in a restrained Beaux-Arts style.

Even the configuration of the murals above the elevator doors invokes historical associations, this time architectural. The visual unit comprised of each mural with its rectangular elevator door brings to mind decorated columns so evident in pre-modernist architecture, but conspicuously absent in this cast concrete building. Billyard's choice of form for his murals looks back to architectural styles where their decorations emphasized supporting structures, linking the Sturdy-Stone Centre to the architecture of Beaux Arts and Neo-Gothic government buildings in Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada, including Ottawa. Ironically, however, while the murals are mounted on supporting concrete walls, they are situated above empty shafts. As such, this modernist structure, recently described as a "grandly futuristic,"[51] actually refers to historical buildings built to establish and house legislative power. The shape of the murals speaks to historical political structures, legal strictures, and their associated institutions, while the sculpted images remind us how these frame our connections to the land. However, if the viewer looks closely, the handmade nature of the murals speaks of human invention and improvisation, implying the possibility of human agency within the Sturdy-Stone Centre's institutional configurations and constraints.

Figure 128: Saskatchewan Coat of Arms

[51] Jeff O'Brien, Ruth W. Millar, William P. Delainey, *Saskatoon: A History of Photographs,* (Regina: Coteau Books, 2006), 123.

Figure 129: Saskatchewan Flag with Shield of Arms and Prairie Lily

One such opportunity for intervention, thematically closely related to the murals, involved environmental issues, an important concern for many in Saskatoon and throughout Saskatchewan in the 1970s. While Billyard was not actively involved in the environmental movement, he was aware of it, and his associations in the art world linked him to it. [52] Billyard's participation in the Shoestring Gallery cooperative put him into contact with people involved in the Forestry Farm Park and Zoo on the outskirts of the city, which he visited to sketch the indigenous wildlife for his sculptures.[53] The Forestry Farm Park was originally developed in the early-twentieth century to explore and access the effectiveness of tree planting on the prairies, tied in with scientific farming methods that included shelterbelts in light of new settlement patterns.[54] The park was created after the federal government transferred ownership of a substantial portion of this planting research station to Saskatoon in the mid-1960s, and the zoo resulted from the relocation of indigenous animals after the closure of a private zoo in 1972. In 1976, the Forestry Farm Park and Zoo became the focus of a group of concerned citizens who formed the Saskatoon Regional Zoological Society, working to assure proper care for the animals.[55] While the murals themselves are not necessarily a direct link to the Forestry Farm Park or the ideals of the Regional Zoological Society their subject matter would resonate with people who shared these concerns.

With representations of Saskatchewan wildlife, vegetation, and ecosystems *Prairie Themes* also calls to mind issues and concerns regarding the province's natural resources by those interested in recreation and tourism, natural resource exploitation, or environmental

[52] Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.
[53] Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[54] Canada's Historic Places, "Forestry Farm and Zoo, National Historic Site of Canada, Statement of Significance," accessed 16 Oct. 2013, http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=7610&pid=0.
[55] Saskatoon Zoo Society, "A brief history: "Welcome to the Forestry Farm Park," accessed 16 Oct. 2013, http://web.archive.org/web/20080424055211/http://www.saskatoonzoosociety.ca/history.htm.

protection. The "massive expansion" of provincial parks in Saskatchewan in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to people's awareness of environmental issues such as protection and management of natural ecosystems often through the introduction of interpretive and educational centres and trails.[56] Development and improved use of the provincial parks and sites coincided with increased mining and forestry activity in Saskatchewan, which spurred the establishment of environmental organizations in the 1970s. Concerned citizens watched closely as the NDP government established crown corporations in the mining, energy and forestry industries, with particular fears about expanded potash and uranium projects, increased gas and oil exploration, the pulp industry and a hydroelectric dam on the Churchill River.[57]

Blakeney's government was committed through its election promises outlined in *New Deal for People*, to establish a Department of the Environment, but the scale it should adopt was a matter of dissension within the cabinet. Established in 1972, it was more modest than originally proposed. However, in 1976 it was able to institute a consultation mechanism and review process to oversee government policies including uranium mining and dam construction. However, battles fought within the government between competing departments made it obvious that not everyone shared a sensibility towards environmental issues. Despite these challenges, Saskatchewan's Environmental Assessment Act was adopted in 1980, the first in Canada.[58] Throughout its mandate the government was aware of and responded to citizen concerns because of the development at municipal and regional levels of environmental lobby groups. These issues were certainly a concern for people who worked in the Sturdy-Stone Centre that housed the offices of the Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation and Tourism and Renewable Resources.[59]

In 1970 the Saskatoon Environmental Society was formed to address a local Saskatoon issue, the development of the Meewasin Valley, but soon expanded to tackle wider provincial

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[56] Saskatchewan, "Provincial Parks," Government of Saskatchewan, accessed 16 Oct. 2013, http://www.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=99c3c562-1b20-4cc1-9174-4310be1ea7b9; Mike Fedyk, Ken Lozinsky, and Bob Herbison, "Provincial Parks," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 16 Oct. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/provincial_parks.html.

[57] David M. Quiring, "Crown Corporations and Publicly Owned Enterprises," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 13 Feb. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/crown_corporations_and_publicly_owned_enterprises.html; John Hall Archer, *Saskatchewan: A People's History,* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 365.

[58] Hugo Maliepaard, "Environmental Policy," in *Policy Innovation in the Saskatchewan Public Sector, 1971-72*, ed. Eleanor D. Glor, (North York, Ontario: Captus Press, 1997), 51-54.

[59] Government Services, *Sturdy-Stone Artwork: Sturdy-Stone Centre Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,* (Government of Saskatchewan, 1980)

concerns such as forestry development, uranium mining, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy.[60] The city of Saskatoon responded to pressure from the Saskatoon Environmental Society, by forming the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Council in 1973.[61] The Saskatoon Environmental Society was instrumental in the lobbying for the province's 1975 Heritage Act, as well as a heritage protection program in Saskatoon, seen as especially important after the destruction of the Norfolk Trust Building to make way for the Sturdy-Stone Centre. Interest in recreation, the environment, and resource exploitation in Saskatchewan at the time of the making and installation of Billyard's murals assured their subject matter would resonate for a wide swathe of the population with varied concerns and interests in the environment. The murals' particular local subject matter delivered in a recognizable architectural form through a comprehensible visual language could be understood as empowering people concerned with Saskatchewan flora and fauna. People could "read" their content, easily relate to it and feel involved in it. The prominent location of *Prairie Themes* on the second floor, visible from the lobby, leaves the impression these matters are of interest to the government, and reminds the government of these citizen concerns.

After *Prairie Themes*

The Sturdy Stone mural commission altered Billyard's approach to his career offering him "a chance to develop new technology, work on a large scale and get exposure," but above all, made him aware of his attraction to sculpture.[62] While he did continue with functional work, his focus shifted to one-off projects, including several private mural commissions in Saskatoon based on the success of *Prairie Themes.* Some of these drew directly from his mural designs, technology, and developments in forming clay. One project involved a large circular sun, again constructed with a jig, and surrounded with textured tiles. Rather appropriately this mural was executed for a solar-powered house as an added selling feature, clearly transmitting the ecological values of alternative energy sources associated with the environmental movement. Other works Billyard designed and made were for backyards such as pools and decorative panels

[60] Saskatchewan Environmental Society: Our Story, "Before Environment Canada there was SES," accessed 17 Oct. 2013, http://www.environmentalsociety.ca/main/about/about-ses/our-story/; Saskatchewan's Environmental Champions, "Saskatchewan Environmental Society," accessed 17 Oct. 2013, http://econet.ca/sk_enviro_champions/ses.html. In 1981 the Saskatoon Environmental Society changed its name to the Saskatchewan Environmental Society to reflect a broader mandate.
[61] Saskatchewan's Environmental Champions.
[62] Billyard, email 30 Aug. 2013.

for the garden. University of Saskatchewan political science professor, David Smith, commissioned a vertically oriented rectangular tiled wall, mounted against the exterior of a garage. Three concave discs with sculptured images of southern prairies, northern woods and a flying bird formed the centrepiece in which the colours were developed as stains rather than glazes. Billyard also created a series of tiles, sculptured murals, and sculptured wildlife exhibited in a 1980 solo exhibition at the Saskatoon Public library. Life-size fish sculptures were displayed on tables and mounted within plates on the wall. Plates were also incorporated into a series of tessellated wall murals that combined grid forms with glazed landscapes represented through minimal loose brushwork.[63] The success of the Sturdy-Stone Centre murals encouraged Billyard to expand the parameters of professional ceramics within his geographical and economic setting.

Figure 130: *Tessellation*, Robert Billyard, c1980

[63] Robert Billyard gallery photos, Robert Billyard archives, private collection. One of this series, *Prairie Night Hexagonal Tessellation*, 1979, is part of the SAB collection. Éveline Boudreau, Judy Haraldson Leslie Potter, "A Perspective on Landscape: Robert Billyard," The Saskatchewan Crafts Council, Saskatchewan Arts Board: Exhibitions, 2003, accessed 20 Oct. 2013, http://www.artsboard.sk.ca/sites/exhibitions/?e=ex_horizons&a=img&id=5.

Figure 131:
Sun Mural for solar house, c1980

Figure 132:
Garden mural Saskatoon, c1980

Figure 133: Sculptured Fish Plate mounted on a wall, Robert Billyard, c1980

Figure 134: Fish Sculpture, Robert Billyard, c1980

The provincial government subsequently purchased the *Prairie Themes* maquettes "for an extra modest cost." In 1980 Government Services suggested these might be exhibited in one of several locations that had Provincial Office Buildings with a formal atmosphere similar to that of the Sturdy-Stone Centre. The maquettes were to be considered a gift of art that recognized the contribution by a local cabinet minister.[64] Suggested destinations were Melfort, Kindersley, Swift Current, or Prince Albert. Melfort, in a rich agricultural section of North-east Saskatchewan, achieved city status in 1980, and was represented in the provincial parliament by NDP MLA and Minister of Industry and Commerce 1976-82, Norman Vickar. Vickar, a former mayor of Melfort, was also Minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Research Council and the Saskatchewan Trading Corporation as well as Agent General and the Chairman of the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation.[65] Kindersley in West Central

[64] Letter from D.E. Foley to Flo Wilkie, "Re Maquettes by artists Billyard and Cicansky, 11 June 1980," R1053 File 90, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[65] Daria Coneghan, "Melfort," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/melfort.html; Norman Vickar Fonds, Fonds F-675, "Vickar, Norman, 1917-

Saskatchewan, a town associated with the agriculture and oil and gas industries, was represented during Blakeney's NDP government by a liberal and a conservative, so it seems unlikely it would have been a serious candidate.[66] On the other hand, Swift Current was a probable candidate for the maquettes. Located on the trans-Canada highway with an economy based on tourism and oil and natural gas, it had been represented for almost twenty years by CCF/NDP MLA Everett Wood who served under Blakeney as Minister of Public Works and Minister of Municipal Affairs, before retiring in 1975.[67] Prince Albert, the third largest city in the province, would have been the most prestigious contender. Considered the "Gateway to the North," it prospered because of gold and uranium discoveries in the 1970s and a reliable forestry industry, Prince Albert was represented by CCF/NDP MLA George Bowerman who served under Blakeney in several ministries, including Minister responsible for Indian and Métis, Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, Minister of Natural Resources, and Minister of the Environment.[68] It does seem, however, that Billyard's maquettes did not end up in Prince Albert in the newly completed government-built Mackintosh Mall as proposed. A year and a half after the suggestion was made, the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan petitioned the Minister of Government Services for artworks for his new office in the Mall. He specified his interest in works similar to the Cicansky and Billyard murals he had seen in the Sturdy-Stone Centre, but a reply from Government Services indicated that no provision had been made for artwork for this particular government locale.[69] The political agenda of Blakeney's government transformed the maquettes, created as unfinished works, into finished works to be displayed where their new public function would symbolically echo that of the final works of art to which they contributed. Their potential destinations, less prestigious than the Sturdy-Stone Centre, reflected their lesser value as maquettes, working models of the actual artwork. These smaller ceramic escutcheons were envisioned to link less populated rural centres with the business and legislative urban focus of

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Biographical History," SAIN Collections: Saskatchewan Archival Information Network, accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/vickar-norman-1917.

[66] David McLennen, "Kindersley," The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/vickar-norman-1917.

[67] Everett Wood Fonds – Fonds F 366, " Wood, Everett I., 1910-1983: Biographical history," SAIN Collections: Saskatchewan Archival Information Network, accessed 4 Oct. 2013, http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/index.php/wood-everett-i-1910-1983.

[68] Brett Quiring, "Bowerman, George Reginald Anderson, 'Ted'," *Saskatchewan Politicians: Lives Past and Present,* (Canadian Plains Research Centre, Regina: University of Regina Press, 2004), 24.

[69] Letter from Hon. Jerry Hammersmith to Hon. Reg Gross, 15 Dec. 1981 and Letter from Reg Gross to Honourable Jerry Hammersmith, 15 January 1982, R1053 File 190a, President's Office SPMC, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

the province, in much the same way the Saskatchewan government was made visible in Saskatoon through the Sturdy-Stone murals. The present location of the maquettes for *Prairie Themes* is unknown, despite inquiries to Government Services.

Billyard's success with *Prairie Themes* inspired him to reply to the government's summer 1980 call for submissions for both the second round of Sturdy-Stone Centre program and the T.C. Douglas Building. His Sturdy-Stone proposal comprised ceramic "waterfowl" attached through mountings drilled into Plexiglas mirrors to achieve the impression of a large migratory flock.[70] According to an evaluation sheet of all the proposals, his incorporation of Plexiglas posed a problem: this material was underscored and presumably strayed too far from the requirement of ceramics as the continuing theme. Billyard's other submission for the T.C. Douglas Building involved a glazed ceramic fountain that included a lighting system. This too was not accepted.[71] As Billyard pointed out, although his functional work was his "bread and butter," working on sculpture and architectural commissions was "fun."[72]

In 1981, Billyard's studio burnt down, precipitating another change in the focus of his work.[73] Between 1981 and 1988, he re-established his Salt and Stone Company in a space adjacent to his home, moving his gas kiln that survived the fire to a special adjoining room. While his functional work was still important he increasingly focussed on wildlife sculpture projects that shifted his technology and practices to include more slip casting needed to keep up with the demand for his work. He also used stains rather than glazes to better control the colour palette of the complex surfaces. Billyard's large wildlife works were well received and he was able to sell his Musk Ox sculptures for about one thousand dollars to many private, corporate and public collectors including Potash Corporation and the University of Saskatchewan.[74] This clientele and the prices he could demand established him as a serious and successful ceramic sculptor in Saskatchewan. Aside from his 1980 solo exhibition, and a handful of private

[70] Letter from P.E. Brown to D.E. Foley, 31 Oct. 1980, R1053 File 90, President's Office SPMC, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Robert Billyard interview by the author, Mission B.C., 27 May 2011.
[71] Letter from P.E. Brown to D.E. Foley, 31 Oct. 1980, R1053 File 90, President's Office SPMC, Saskatchewan Archives Board.
[72] Billyard, 27 May 2011
[73] Ibid. Unfortunately Billyard's studio fire also destroyed the material culture associated with the Sturdy-Stone murals including his proposals that were not accepted. The only record of preparation work and making techniques are a few photos that were stored elsewhere and which are in Billyard's private collection.
[74] Ibid.

commissions, *Prairie Themes* is the only large-scale glazed mural project from this period of Billyard's ceramic production.

Prairie Themes brought together traces of craft practices, architectural terra cotta, anthropology, and art history, an amalgam that visually expressed Billyard's philosophy about art and craft. His view was that it did not matter if someone's training was in the craft or the fine arts sector; the importance lay with what was done with that training.[75] As the Northern Saskatchewan CARFAC representative, a SCC member, and a respected instructor at the University of Saskatchewan, Billyard had opportunities to transmit his philosophy, and the Sturdy-Stone project was an important venue for this message. When the provincial government reviewed the province's community college system in 1979, Billyard, along with the SCC, expressed interest in the establishment of an arts and crafts post-secondary program in Prince Albert,[76] and was he was appointed the SCC representative on the Saskatchewan Art College Research Committee in 1981.[77] While teaching ceramics in Prince Albert's community college program, he was able to share his extensive mural making knowledge. After Billyard moved with his family to British Columbia in 1988 he abandoned ceramics and currently works in other media, notably photography, drawing and wood sculpture. [78] His interest in and respect for the world of nature has recently been expressed in a new photography book based on Henry David Thoreau's writing.[79]

Conclusion

As a member of an actor-network, *Prairie Themes* forms the social through "its many ties."[80] They grew from ideas, techniques, and experiences that included the establishment, maintenance, and modification of professional ceramic associations such as the Manitoba ceramic department, Claremont Graduate School, Interpace, *Kangiqliniq*, the University of Saskatoon, the SCC, and CARFAC. Groups combining people, tools, equipment, materials,

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[75] Billyard, 27 May 2011
[76] Ibid; Jake Kutarna, "Community and Regional Colleges," Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, accessed 7 Oct. 2013, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/community_and_regional_colleges.html.
[77] Minutes of the Board Meeting, S.C.C., April 25 1981, Book 6, Saskatchewan Craft Council Archives.
[78] Billyard, 27 May 2011.
[79] Robert Billyard, *Up Close with Thoreau: His Thoughts and My Photographs,* (Mission B.C.: Laughing Raven Productions, 2012).
[80] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 217.

processes, and institutions were located in Manitoba, California, *Kangiqliniq,* and Saskatchewan, and among them were transferred ideas of what constituted professional ceramics, local identity, and techniques and tools that enabled these to be realized differently in each place. The murals' coming-into-being depended upon Billyard's exposure to extant American industrial architectural terra cotta and pre-Columbian ceramics from Mexico and Central America and his ability to adapt and translate his own studio aesthetic concerns and traditions of making to these forms. Paradoxically their existence can also be attributed to the destruction of these very same objects that precipitated a preservation movement, and in this sense Billyard's *Prairie Themes* operate within a salvage paradigm. Their appearance is even more compelling as the making of *Prairie Themes* coincided with the closure of many of the American terra cotta companies in the wake of modernist architecture's dominance. The second floor lobby mural program revives defunct architectural decorative practices, and by doing so critiques their disappearance and perhaps even assesses the limits of their propositions.[81] *Prairie Themes* challenges the ahistorical language of both modernist architecture and urban destruction, but also extends what modernist architecture can be, as temporal and stylistic boundaries are ruptured in an ironic, but hopeful gesture.

Jane Rendell's distinction between space connected to social relations, and place as a particular location for these relations to occur, serves well here in looking at the murals as a "critical spatial practice" within the establishment of such group formations.[82] The second floor lobby of the Sturdy-Stone Centre makes a space for a re-evaluation of architectural and ceramic histories, and how they intersect with political goals and the formation of this prairie society. As a place for social relations, the murals, through their shield-like form, promulgate the exercise of a particular kind of political power based upon British institutions; but through their iconography and processes of formation they also propose that there is, within this institutional model, a place for the voices of citizens. By means of Billyard's escutcheons in which hand marks and slight irregularities testify to their studio origins, this craftsman, working at a grassroots level, successfully articulated his vision in an important government space. Such an utterance suggests opportunities for other individuals or groups to likewise communicate their ideas and concerns,

[81] Thanks to Dr. Dominic Hardy for pointing out this latter function of the murals.
[82] Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between,* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 6, 20.

implying the government exists as a collective that is approachable, ready to listen and respond to its citizens. While the shape and political dynamics of the building contributed to the overall physical shape of these "official" murals, in terms of interactive close associations the murals shape the prestige, perception, and use of the second floor by office workers and its clientele alike. Their form ultimately declares a person's view is welcome and citizen power is respected, but only within the established institutional parameters.

CHAPTER 9

A RURAL SIMPLICITY: *UNTITLED*, RANDY WOOLSEY

Introduction

When the submission call went out for the second phase of art of the Sturdy- Stone Centre ceramic decoration project, Randy Woolsey jumped at the opportunity, aware he would be on his own designing his proposed mural. Gregory Hardy, with whom he had collaborated on the exterior east façade mural, had returned to painting and had applied for a T.C. Douglas Building commission on his own.[1] Woolsey's initial proposal in the autumn of 1980 was summarized briefly in a government document as a "sun, wheat field and farmer,"[2] and destined for the tenth floor. Initially this floor housed the provincial government's Saskatoon cabinet offices; today it accommodates the Saskatoon City Criminal Legal Aid Area Office.[3] Woolsey's proposal was one of two chosen from five entries, and he completed the second round maquette phase in early 1981, at which point the Public Works Department recommended a contract for "$13, 545".[4] In the SCC publication *Craft Factor,* a 1983 review of the completed Sturdy-Stone Centre mural project described Woolsey's tenth floor work in terms of bucolic prairie memories: "Reminiscent of sunny summer days on the farm, the scene depicts wheat fields, animals and clouds. The unglazed red clay reflects the simplicity of the rural scene."[5] The perceived simplicity of the unglazed clay relief distances this mural project from the complex abstract images involving multiple layers of textures, slips and glaze colours in Woolsey's exterior mural executed with Hardy, and ties it to the bucolic pioneer life depicted in Cicansky's *Old Working Class.* This perception of rural life as "simple" was one constructed from a nostalgic urban

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[1] Hardy submitted two proposals, one for "very modern" painted murals, and the other for a tapestry. Neither of these was accepted. Memorandum from P.E. Brown to D. E. Foley re Art Competition T.C. Douglas & Sturdy Stone, 2 Feb. 1981; Handwritten Notations on "17. Hardy" in document "This is a Competition for Works of Art For 1. Sturdy-Stone Centre 2. T.C. Douglas Building," R 1053 File 90, SPCM President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[2] Handwritten Notations on second "Sturdy-Stone Centre" in document "This is a Competition for Works of Art For 1. Sturdy-Stone Centre 2. T.C. Douglas Building," R 1053 File 90, SPCM President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[3] "Department memo from Ned Shillington to D.E. Foley, February 14, 1978 re Saskatoon cabinet office Location," R 1613 File 3.3, SPMC President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Legal Aid Saskatchewan, "Contact Us," accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://69.27.116.234/contact/office_list.php.

[4] Memorandum from P. E. Brown to D. E. Foley Re Art Competition T.C. Douglas & Sturdy Stone, 81 01 02," R 1053 File 90, SPCM President's Office, Saskatchewan Archives Board.

[5] Peggy Forde, "Sturdy-Stone Murals: Abstract to Concrete," *Craft Factor* 8, no.3 (Summer, 1983): 3.

viewpoint overlooking the hardship, challenges and complexity of actual life lived on Saskatchewan farms, often increasingly reliant upon technology.[6] However, this nostalgia coupled with the importance of "[t]he accurate recording of a time gone forever" was a recurrent theme in Saskatchewan art circles, expressed in the 1976 folk art exhibition *Grassroots Saskatchewan,* at the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, organized in part by David Thauberger, one of the Regina ceramicists.[7] At the time, curator Carol Philips explained that "grassroots" was a term important to Saskatchewan culture, politics, and economy, "an intangible which represents the very essence of prairie life, the supportive substance upon which less fundamental activities depend."[8] The SCC review of Woolsey's tenth-floor murals tying them to the essence of the Saskatchewan prairies indicated that, on the most obvious level, the murals fulfilled the government's thematic mandate.

This chapter speaks to such a perceived rural "simplicity" of this mural project. It argues that this interpretation is tied to formal aspects of the mural dependent upon traditional ceramic techniques Woolsey had encountered in Japan and carefully studied over several years, until he finally integrated them into his functional studio practice in Saskatchewan. While the mural may appear simple, in fact it was the result of complex geographical and cultural encounters far from bucolic rural simplicity. In comparison to his monumental exterior mural, the smaller size, more intimate setting, and interior space of this later commission presented Woolsey with different challenges and opportunities. How he addressed these and how the murals subsequently address the viewer form the focus of this chapter. By paying close attention to the subject matter, style and making techniques, I propose that Woolsey brought together two cultures in the mural, one emblematic of Saskatchewan, and the other of Japan, expressed through the intersection of common interests and ideas found in their respective folk arts as well as links to modernist abstraction. I pay attention to the formal aspects of these tenth-floor murals, using these to look at techniques of formation and the notion of skill that I suggest establish their close associations

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[6] Carol Payne, " 'How Shall We Use These Gifts?': Imaging the Land in the National Film Board of Canada's Still Photography Division," in *Beyond Wilderness: The Group of Seven, Canadian Identity, and Contemporary Art,* ed. John O'Brien and Peter White, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2007),157-59.

[7] David Thauberger, "Grassroots Saskatchewan: The Artists," in Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, *Grassroots Saskatchewan,* (Regina: University of Regina, 1976), np.

[8] Carol Philips, "Introduction," in Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, *Grassroots Saskatchewan.* "Grass Roots" was also used as the title of a 1969 *Artscanada* issue dedicated to Canadian folk art. Ronald Bloore wrote the essay for the Prairie Provinces and featured, among other sculptural and architectural examples of folk art, the work of Jan Myers. Ronald Bloore, "The Prairies: 'to assert man's presence'," *Artscanada* 26, no 138/39 (Dec. 1969): 24-29.

with the *Mingei* Movement that dominated Japanese art pottery when Woolsey first trained and practiced in Japan. I turn to post-colonial discourse to speak to issues of cross-cultural connections, hybridity, the processes of Orientalism, and the mechanisms of globalization as they interacted with the coming-into-being of these murals and their reception. My discussion of the *Mingei* movement relies particularly on the scholarship of Asian design historian Yuko Kikuchi and anthropologist Brian Moeran.[9] The layered complexities of these cultural intersections form the biography of these murals as much as their maker.

Simplicity of the Rural Scene

The Murals as One of Many

Woolsey's tenth-floor mural project is comprised of two very distinct sections. One, an irregular narrow pentagon "wheat field," stretches across the bank of the three south elevators from wall to wall; the other, a large convex "sun" disc, approximately six feet in diameter, hangs between the two elevators on the opposing north wall. Such differences in shape, size and spatial arrangement between these two components set this project apart from the other elevator mural projects. The longer of Woolsey's murals, the irregular pentagon, is perhaps better understood as a scalene triangle with its ends truncated where it terminates at the intersecting walls. This asymmetrical mural's one obtuse-angle vertex finishes at the height of the elevator doorframe between two of the three elevators, and its altitude is approximately one half of the distance between the top of the elevator doorframe and the ceiling. In the space on the ochre-pebbled wall above the "wheat field" and dispersed across the length are nine darker terra cotta irregular clouds, a small flat sun disc, and an unidentified flying bird, all individually anchored. The epoxy that has been used to fix these small elements to the wall is visible in some places. This suggests that less care has been taken to mount these small pieces, or that they presented particular and surprising challenges to Ketler when he attached them to the wall. Facing this

[9] Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and* Mingei *Theory: Cultural Nationalism and Oriental Orientalism,* (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004). Kikuchi's research on the Mingei Movement brings together close readings of both Japanese and British texts as well as archival material from both countries. Other Western scholars who have extensively written about this movement include anthropologist Brian Moeran and East Asian area specialist Lisbeth Kim Brandt. While Moeran's work specifically concentrates on post-1945 Japan, particularly from the 1970s onwards, Brandt covers the early to mid-twentieth century. Brian Moeran, *Lost Innocence folk craft potters of Onta Japan,* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1984); Brian Moeran, *Folk art potters of Japan: Beyond an anthropology of aesthetics,* (Surrey UK and Honolulu Hawaii: Curzon and University of Hawaii Press, 1997); Kim Brandt, *Kingdom of Beauty: Mingei and the Politics of Folk Art in Imperial Japan,* (Durham North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007).

mural is the convex-shaped "sun," its linear terra cotta, pale green and ochre patterns radiating from an irregular circular centre. The position of this large sun, directly opposite the lowest vertex and the highest altitude of the longer mural, contributes to some form of coherence and balance between the two otherwise disparate murals. The sun's diameter is large enough that it extends above the elevators, bringing them visually together to form a triangular unit, rather than emphasizing each elevator separately. The size and form of the murals take into consideration the increased height of the tenth floor as opposed to the second, eighth and ninth floors. Both of these monochrome low relief murals with their intricate textured patters are well-lit by long tubes of fluorescent lights that provide the ambient hallway lighting, and by spots, eleven shining on the "wheat field" and seven on the circular "sun." This chapter argues that the two murals, one visually rooted in folk representations and the other in abstract modernism, converse with each other spatially, thematically, and chromatically to initiate a discourse that brings together rural, urban, local and global concerns.

Figure 135: *Untitled*, Randy Woolsey, 1982, unglazed stoneware murals above tenth floor elevators, looking west towards offices

As agents for representing Saskatchewan required by the government mural project directive, these murals secure themselves within the collective discourse of the building through colour, form, theme and style. Viewers can especially relate them to Sures' "Symbolic Wheel" on the exterior west façade and Cicansky's *Old Working Class* above the first floor elevators. If we follow someone's entry from the main west entrance to the first-floor elevators and up to the tenth floor, a cohesive visual and thematic experience is maintained. The tenth-floor disc, with its vigorous terra cotta rhythms radiating from a central area, is visually tied to Sures' west façade mural and hence to Saskatchewan abstract modernism as expressed in the paintings by Regina Five painters, Arthur McKay and Ron Bloore. The effect of both murals is similar: dynamic circular surfaces constantly in movement expanding outwards, speaking of sun, energy, and wind. The metaphorical associations with wheat and the unglazed terra cotta colour of the ceramics also tie these two murals together and to Cicansky's *Old Working Class.*

There are disparities, however. Woolsey's organic movements in his treatment of the circle differ from Sures' geometric solution. The tenth floor disc is sectioned into three concentric circles with diameters in the ratio of 1:3:5; however, these circular cuts are imposed on the design of organic radii emerging from an amorphous disc in the centre, inside the innermost circle. In contrast, Sures' concentric circles arose from the modular design elements and are integrated into the circle's outward expansion. Woolsey's middle circle is sliced into sixteen radial sections, and the outer circle into thirty-two. These straight cuts divide the work into manageable, regularly shaped tiles, but are imposed upon the very complex pattern of parallel, curvilinear, and radiating lines with their subtle shifts in thickness and angles. Alternating dark red and ochre bands of various widths organically branch from the central terra cotta disc, spiralling outwards. The dynamic is made more interesting by an overlay of celadon-coloured wedge-shaped ribbons that appear halfway through this radial expansion. Because of the complexity of the spiralling design, following any of the intersecting lines as cutting guides would have been impossible, but the dynamism of these intricate patterns visually overpower the straight tile cuts that ultimately do not then impede the mural's organic flow. To even tease apart how the bands are visually woven together is a challenging and time-consuming puzzle.

The grain field theme is another connection that ties these exterior and interior murals together. While the disc was designated as a "sun" in the proposal, in fact its abstract composition and the regularity of its repeated curvilinear ribbons recall wheat fields in the wind.

As such its abstract landscape vocabulary associates it to both exterior murals, although especially to Sures' "wheat field." On the wall opposite this disc, the long wheat field is executed in another visual vocabulary, "folk art," that stylistically references Cicansky's prairie settlers on the first floor who worked the land and harvested the grain. Woolsey's choice of this theme was linked to his recent move to a tiny rural community, Ruddell Saskatchewan, just off the Yellowhead Trail, composed of a handful of houses surrounded by fields of wheat. From his home he had a view of these fields that stretched for two miles down to the North Saskatchewan River.[10]

Woolsey's wheat field mural recalls folk art because of its viewpoint, use of disparate perspectives, and inclusion of specific narrative details. This field invites us in through the lowest vertex where we can see a gopher at the base of the wheat, butterflies, and an insect flying against the stalks. The proximity of these creatures implies we are involved in an intimate encounter. They also shift our vision vertically and horizontally. We raise our heads looking up at the high wheat stalks, a movement mimicking a child's viewpoint, and yet this perspective is disrupted by a simultaneous long view of fallow fields that stretch to the horizon, a vision only possible from a high viewing point. The vertical and lateral field recession is achieved through several strategies: as the mural extends sideways from its low entry point, it diminishes in height; from the midpoint upwards the tiles become thinner; and along the mural's length the heads of the grain become smaller. Our eyes are still pulled to the extreme edges by details such as grain elevators on the right and a diminutive cross with a flower at its base on the left. Two small hawks can be seen soaring above the fields, almost lost as they fly against the clouds that direct our vision upwards above the main body of the work. The detailed content, composition, and style of this mural references much of what has been called Saskatchewan folk art based on depictions of prairie living and farming by painters such as Jan Wyers and circulated within Saskatchewan art institutions.[11]

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[10] Randy Woolsey, telephone interview by the author, Kasama Japan, 6 Nov. 2013.

[11] Ronald Bloore, "Jan G. Wyers," *Artcanada* 17, no.3 (March 1960): 60-65; Ronald Bloore, "Forward," in *Jan Gerrit Wyers 1888-1973,* ed. Andrew Oko, (Regina: Mackenzie Art Gallery, 1989), 7-10; Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, *Grassroots Saskatchewan.* For a more detailed discussion of folk art and its place in Saskatchewan during the 1970s see the first chapter of this dissertation.

Figure 136: *These Good Old Thrashing Days,* Jan Wyers, c1955

Mingei and The Mural Maker

Woolsey's tenth-floor murals are actually closely related in style, subject and working methods to his training in Japan as an "artist- potter," where *Mingei*, or Japanese folk craft was greatly appreciated and supported by the government, cultural institutions, and consumers. Mashiko pottery scholar, Ann Sommer Holmes employed the term "artist-potter" to describe the Japanese potter who falls "somewhere in between the anonymous artisan and the elite artist, between the technician and the master potter." [12] The hybrid post-1945 Japanese artist-potter designation was dependent upon the aesthetics and making practices associated with the *Mingei* Movement and its practice within modern art markets.[13] *Mingei* directly translated as "art of the

[12] Anne Sommer Holmes, "The Transition of the Artisan-Potter to the Artist Potter in Mashiko, a Folkware Kiln Site in Japan," (PhD dissertation, New York University, 1982), 13. I employ Holmes terminology here as she deals specifically with Mashiko potters in the time period Woolsey apprenticed and studied in Mashiko and worked in Kasama.

[13] I use the idea of "anterior" in relation to hybridity following Homi Bhabha: "[the] importance of hybridity is that it bears those traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses. It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation and meaning and representation." Homi Bhabha quoted in Jonathan Rutherford, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: community, culture, difference,* ed. Jonathan Rutherford, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 211.

people" or "folk crafts" was coined in about 1927 by Soetsu Yanagi, Japanese philosopher and promoter of Japanese folk art, to explain the British concepts of folk art and "peasant."[14] This notion was heavily influenced by Japanese attention to its own "peasant" art, a reaction against Western modernization that engulfed Japan after the nineteenth-century Meiji Restoration.[15] Japanese interest in folk art was coherent with the ideas of both John Ruskin and William Morris who, uncomfortable with industrialization in nineteenth-century England, championed vernacular art, especially medieval English arts and crafts and the guild system. The twentieth-century British potter, Bernard Leach, steeped in the Morris Arts and Craft philosophy and residing in Japan between 1909 and 1920, was one of several "Occidental" influences on Yanagi.[16] Others included American and European philosophers Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, William James, Maurice Maeterlinck, Elie Metchnikoff, William Blake, Henri Bergson, Leo Tolstoy and even the Catholic medieval scholars Johannes Scotus Erigena, and Maester Johann Eckhart. These thinkers were all known for their social idealism, mysticism, "new-science" or occultism, and inquiries into rationalizing science and philosophy. Yanagi intermingled their ideas with those he encountered earlier through Buddhist studies under Japanese philosophers Suzuki Daisetz and Nishida Kitarō.[17] This fusion of modern and

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[14] Kikuchi, 2004, 15-16; Yuko Kikuchi, "Hybridity and the Oriental Orientalism of *Mingei* Theory," in "Craft, Culture and Identity," ed. Tanya Harrod, special issue, *Journal of Design History* 10, no. 4 (1997): 343.

[15] For a discussion of Japan at this key period see Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa times to the present,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 61-76.

[16] In discussing the history of the *Mingei* Movement, I employ the terms "Occident" and "Orient" as used by Mingei scholar Yuko Kikuchi in her published 2004 study of the development and importance of this movement in late-nineteenth century through to the mid- twentieth century Japan. Kikuchi shows how Yanagi and others absorbed the Occidental/Oriental divide to market Japanese culture throughout this period. At the same time, arguing for the hybrid nature of this modern Japanese craft movement, she also deconstructs this Orient/Occident dichotomy that fuelled the popularity of Mingei, both outside and inside Japan, by documenting its Occidental and Oriental philosophical, cultural, political and economic antecedents. In the terms of post-colonialist scholar Homi Bhabha, Kikuchi describes this hybridity as "transnational and translational." See Kikuchi 1997, 353 and Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* (London: Routledge, 1994), 172. In Kikuchi's earlier publications she employs the terms "Western" and "Asian" as well as "Occidental" and "Oriental." Yuko Kikuchi, The Myth of Yanagi's Originality: The Formation of 'Mingei' Theory in Its Social and Historical Context," *Journal of Design History* 7, no. 4 (1994); Kikuchi 1997. For a discussion of these terms see Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (London: Penguin), 1977. For a justification by Kikuchi regarding her theoretical strategy of "taking and extending Said's approach" and using "post-Saidian theory" see Kikuchi, 2004, xvi-xvii. For critiques of Said's *Orientalism* see Aijz Ahmad, "Orientalism *and After*," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader,* ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994): 162-171; Dennis Porter, "Orientalism *and its problems*," in Williams and Chrisman, 150-161.

[17] Kikuchi, 2004, 4-9. See as well Kikuchi, 1994, 249, 251-252. Kikuchi points out that Yanagi, as the main editor of *Shirakaba* (White Birch), introduced many philosophical ideas from the "Occident" that were rooted in mysticism and fine arts that ranged from Egypt through medieval and renaissance styles to the modern abstractionists. Kikuchi, 2004, 9.

historical Occidental philosophical approaches with an appreciation for Buddhist philosophy and art led to Yanagi's formal establishment of the *Mingei* movement in 1927.[18] *Mingei* scholar Yuko Kikuchi suggests: "Yanagi re-evaluated Oriental art with his acquired Occidental-influenced 'new eyes' and created a hybrid idea of Occidental and Oriental religious art."[19] Yanagi subsequently ascribed an innate Japanese ethnicity to Japanese Buddhist art. From this he developed an appreciation for simple household objects made by anonymous Japanese craftsman that he touted as purely Japanese, made without foreign influences.[20] In post-1945 Japan, these objects became closely associated with the Japanese Tea Ceremony and a particular definition of "Japaneseness," vis-à-vis "Euramerica," that Yanagi sought to export.[21] From its inception *Mingei,* as a philosophy made and transmitted through craft objects, served as a tool of Japanese cultural nationalism. It arose from the role craft products played as an important national export during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, had ties to the Japanese imperialist expansion throughout the 1930s where it became associated with "Oriental Orientalism," and then in the post war years was linked to what Kikuchi calls "Reverse Orientalism."[22]

Leach and Yanagi were collaborators in aesthetic philosophy, and even though the *Mingei* movement had not been formally born, or even named, when they began their friendship in Japan in 1910, the groundwork for the appreciation of the folk crafts of Japan was laid.[23] When Leach returned to England in 1920 he popularized the ideals and aesthetics of the Japanese peasant ceramics he had encountered under Yanagi, translating them into an English context. One of his closest friends, Shoji Hamada, who accompanied Leach to England for three years helping him set up St. Ives pottery, subsequently became an important figure in Yanagi's *Mingei* movement.[24] In the decades following the Second World War, from the 1950s through the 1970s,

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[18] Kikuchi, 1997, 346.
[19] Ibid, 345.
[20] Ibid, 346
[21] Kikuchi, 2004, 204-205.
[22] Kikuchi explains her use of this term: "In Orientalism, the Orient including Japan was an epistemological object which had to be observed, studied, collected, taxonomised and preserved. Japan also repeated this cultural politicisation within the Orient, by projecting Japanese-style Orientalism translated and appropriated from Orientalism. I have called this Oriental Orientalism." Ibid, 123. According to Kikuchi Reverse Orientalism occurs when the Orientalist's binary values that defined the Orient as inferior to the Occident are reversed so that the inferior become superior and the Orient is reconfigured as superior to the Occident, without deconstructing the binary system already in place. Ibid, 197-98.
[23] Kikuchi, 1994, 258-9.
[24] Janet Darnell Leach, preface to *Hamada: Potter,* by Bernard Leach, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1975), 14; Yuko Kikuchi, "Hamada and the *Mingei* Movement," in *Shoji Hamada: Master Potter,* ed. Timothy Wilcox, (London: Lund Humphries in association with Ditchling Museum, Sussex, 1998), 22, 24. See also Japanese

a variety of mechanisms conspired to assure *Mingei* assumed a hegemonic status in ceramics in the English-speaking world. These included the publication and wide distribution of Leach's writings, particularly *A Potter's Book*, lecture tours by Leach, Hamada, and Yanagi, the appearance in 1972 of an English translation of Yanagi's treatise on *Mingei, The Unknown Craftsman: a Japanese insight into beauty* and a postwar fascination with Japan in the West.[25] Anthropologist Brian Moeran remarked in 1997: "[M]*ingei* is a world-wide phenomenon not just appreciated but practiced by potters in Europe and the Americas, as well as in Japan."[26] This approach was deeply entrenched throughout Canada and found a rich expression amongst many Saskatchewan potters and consumers.

As a young man Woolsey studied and worked in postwar Japan in the late 1960s to mid-1970s at a time when the ideals of the *Mingei* movement were strong both there and in North America. In Japan, Woolsey connected with *Mingei* through a daily absorption of its aesthetic values rather than by way of an academic or philosophical engagement. He had arrived in Japan as part of a project to travel the world during the 1960s, after rejecting the academic study of chemistry at the University of Saskatchewan during his graduating year. He arrived there from Australia in 1968 at the age of twenty-three, where he eventually began an apprenticeship at the Tsukamoto Pottery in Mashiko, Tochigi Prefecture.[27] Mashiko, a village north of Tokyo, is in a mountainous region and the site where Shoji Hamada had chosen to set up a craft village dedicated to the *Mingei* tradition. Hamada based this project on the British medieval guild system as interpreted by the Arts and Craft Movement, and previously attempted by Ruskin and Morris, as well as others, in England.[28] Hamada moved to Mashiko to study pottery in 1924, where he worked under established potters in the folk tradition before opening his own workshop, kiln, and home in 1930-31.[29] Even though his guild project did not materialize, his presence there assured the town and its kilns became a destination for pottery students, collectors and aficionados.[30] After the Second World War, Japanese media publicized the alternative life

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Folkcraft Museum, Sori Yanagi, introduction to *Mingei: Masterpieces of Japanese Folkcraft,* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1991).

[25] Bernard Leach, *A Potter's Book*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1940); Kikuchi, 2004. 10-11; Janet Darnell Leach, 1975, 9-10. Soetsu Yanagi, *The Unknown Craftsman: a Japanese insight into beauty*, revised edition, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1989).

[26] Moeran, 1997, x.

[27] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

[28] Kikuchi, 2004, 67

[29] Holmes, 1982, 56-58.

[30] Wilcox, 1998, 77-78.

style and value system Hamada offered, portraying him as an "outstanding" person who could serve as a "role-model".[31] As Hamada scholar Susan Peterson pointed out, Hamada credits himself with keeping the kilns going in the years during and after the Second World War when there was an exodus of the traditional potters.[32] His presence attracted new potters to Mashiko, a place he publicized as open to independent approaches.[33] The complex combination of Hamada's reputation as a proponent of *Mingei* and close associate of Yanagi and Leach, his own work that commanded substantial prices based upon his personal reputation, and his 1955 status of a National Living Treasure, indicates the uneasy relationship between the principles of *Mingei* as a philosophical and cultural ideal and its actual practice in the economic world.

Figure 137: Bowl, Bernard Leach, 1947, stoneware

Figure 138: Vase, Shoji Hamada, 1957, stoneware

[31] Holmes, 1982, 67.
[32] Susan Peterson, *Shoji Hamada: A Potter's Way and Work,* (New York: Harper and Row and Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974), 61.
[33] Holmes, 1982, 70.

By the mid-1950s Mashiko was considered the "El Dorado of many Western potters."[34] From a trickle in the 1960s, Western visitors and apprentices to Mashiko (and other Japanese pottery centres) increased in volume throughout the 1970s into the 1980s, as potter after potter made the pilgrimage to Japan to become steeped in Japanese culture and ceramic techniques.[35] Mashiko's pottery tradition originated only in 1857, considered recent in comparison with kilns elsewhere in the country that were centuries old, such as Mino, Bizen, Karatsu, and Seto for example. Because of this late start and in comparison to historical pottery regions where potters were "trying to perpetuate their old traditions," Mashiko potters after the Second World War were "relatively free to experiment and develop their own way of working." Holmes points out that rather than trying to "imitate the style of pottery made during the finest period of the history of the kiln's production," as was the traditional approach in Bizen and Karatsu, Mashiko's recent development in the mid-nineteenth century made it "a kiln site like no other." [36] Here *Mingei* philosophy and traditions mingled with aesthetic and production adaptations related to commercial requirements informed by the revived postwar popularity of the Tea Ceremony aesthetic. This combination fostered the development of the studio potter as artist, a Western ideal that, while diverging from the *Mingei* model of the anonymous production potter, still relied upon the aesthetics attached to this particular production style.

Woolsey was first introduced to pottery in 1968 while wandering around the Seibu Department Store in Shibuya Tokyo, an area where he taught English as a second language. A chance conversation with a student led him to a meeting with pottery connoisseur, author, scholar and maker, Koyama Fugio who was also on the Commission for Protection of Cultural Properties. This institution was highly influential as it "designated Japanese pottery that should be put into the National Treasure or Important Cultural Class [and] was instrumental in setting up the system of ningen kokuho (living national treasures)."[37] Koyama suggested Woolsey study

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[34] Janet Darnell Leach, 1975, 10.

[35] The term "Western" is used here to designate potters who visited Japan from Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. While many of these areas or their colonial cultures are also classified within the Occident of Said, the term here reflects a shift in global politics. In 1977 Said suggested that after the Second World War the United States assumed the role of the Occident in terms of the Orient, with Asia as a particular focus at that time as the Orient. See Said, 1977, 2, 4. This term also acknowledges the successful exportation of *Mingei* theory and the dynamics of Reverse Orientalism suggested by Kikuchi.

[36] Holmes, 1982, 10-11.

[37] Robert Yellin, "A Life Fired by Devotion to Ceramics," *The Japanese Times*, (30 Dec. 2000), in Robert Yellin, Who's Who: Koyama Fujio Tanegashima Nanban *Pottery Information Center,* accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.e-yakimono.net/html/koyama-fujio-jt.html. Koyama wrote two books on Japanese pottery that were translated into

in Bizen and offered to make arrangements. However, during a visit to a Tokyo shop that sold Mashiko pottery, Woolsey impetuously decided instead to arrange to work in Mashiko, about sixty miles north of Tokyo. His choice of Mashiko was based on time constraints related to his visitor's visa renewal and an interest in the area's pottery aesthetics. This differed from reasons cited by others who had moved to the town because it was "a simple remote community" or accessible to Tokyo through the train lines, or because of Hamada's presence.[38] The shop's owner helped him find apprenticeship employment at Tsukamoto Pottery, the largest pottery in the Mashiko area. This establishment numbered several employees who produced tens of thousands of pieces annually, many for the Tsukamoto gallery in Mashiko. Production was varied and for convenience and aesthetic reasons was fired in four different styles of kilns. For their preferred anagama kiln, 7,000 to 8,000 pieces of pottery were produced daily. With no previous pottery experience, Woolsey worked during the day glazing alongside several women, but studied on his own time in the evenings on the wheel. Like the other apprentices he learned to throw by watching the daytime throwers, practicing what he had seen until ten at night.[39] Twice a year the Tsukamoto pottery fired student work in the norigama kiln, taking most of this to sell in their shop as payment for the students' equipment use, materials, and firing. Rather than following the usual three to four year apprenticeship program, Woolsey only stayed at Tsukamoto pottery for a few months because his visitor's visa was short and renewal required him to travel to Korea.

Woolsey was pleased, however, with the openness in approaches of the Mashiko potters, contrasting it with what he called the "conservative" approach of Bizen.[40] A potter who apprenticed alongside Woolsey at Tsukamoto, Naobumi Kubota, concurred with this observation: "at Bizen, the tradition dominates the pottery, making it very closed… [but] [i]t isn't enough to accept the achievements of the past; we have to incorporate man's accumulated experience into our present work." Kubota also attributed his friendship with Woolsey and

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English: Fugio Koyama, *Two Thousand Years of Oriental Ceramics*, trans. John Figgess, (New York: Abrams, 1961); Fugio Koyama, *The Heritage of Japanese Ceramics,* trans. John Figgess, (New York: Weatherhill, 1973), originally published as *Nihon Toji no Dento* (1967).

[38] Janet Darnell Leach, 1975, 11.

[39] Takeshi Tsukamoto quoted in Holmes, 1982, 454-456; Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

[40] Woolsey's work in 1968 -1969 involved eight hours of work for the equivalent of a dollar a day plus a small room and a daily box lunch. He had only two Thursdays off a month and learned pottery by "osmosis." Randy Woolsey, Japan, 6 Nov. 2013; Derek Davies, "Japan: Secret of the Senses," *The Telegraph,* (9 March, 2001), accessed 14 Feb. 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/asia/japan/717085/Japan-Secrets-of-the-senses.html.

another fellow Tsukamoto apprentice, Gerd Knäpper from Germany, with the realization "that there are no borders when you know people individually. We can understand one another without being conscious that we are foreigners. We understand each other because we discuss our feelings and attitudes about pottery."[41] Another Tsukamoto apprentice, Mashiko potter Hiroshi Seto observed that Mashiko potters originate "from all over Japan. It is natural for a stranger to make his home here. Styles are not limited."[42] Woolsey's cultural difference was accepted and even appreciated among potting colleagues. His short apprenticeship at Tsukamoto was not unheard of in Mashiko. For at least one Mashiko pottery master Shoji Kamota apprenticeships were not to be undertaken for extended periods because independence was a virtue and young potters needed "to find [their] own way, leave, and to struggle alone."[43] This challenge to struggle, solve problems and find one's own way resonated with Woolsey's experience of growing up in a family of "makers" in Saskatchewan where his father worked as a cabinet maker.[44] The following year Woolsey continued his studies in forming and glaze technology under Koji Nakano at nearby Kasama, where he was the first Westerner to settle.[45] There he built his studio and one of the first wood-fired kilns in the area, a double-chambered kiln from "reclaimed kiln materials." A salt-glazed kiln followed in 1973.[46] The open and varied approaches to pottery styles and learning techniques unique in Japan to Mashiko and Kasama provided Woolsey with the confidence to experiment and solve problems as they presented themselves when he later tackled his Sturdy-Stone Centre commissions.

Woolsey's pottery success in Japan came quickly despite his unconventional approach that circumvented the usual long Japanese apprenticeships with master potters or in potteries such as Tsukumoto Pottery, often combined with art school and/or formal technical ceramic education.[47] His Canadian origins where he had been nurtured in "Western" aesthetics and

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[41] Naobumi Kubota quoted in Holmes, 1982, 99-100.
[42] Hiroshi Seto quoted in Holmes, 1982, 111.
[43] Naobumi Kubota quoted in Holmes, 1982, 106.
[44] Randy Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.
[45] Woolsey's 1982 biography puts the year as 1968 when he apprenticed at Tsukamoto Pottery and 1969 his studies under Nakano. However, a 1977 article makes these dates one year later. Randy Woolsey, *Randy Woolsey: Recent Work*, (Regina: Dunlop Gallery, 1982), 4; Charles R. Watrall, "Randy Woolsey: Seeing and Being Able to Consider 'Life' in a Pot is Neither Easy Nor Easily Defined," *Arts West* 2, no. 5 (Sept. / Oct. 1977): 21; Randy Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.
[46] Charles Watrall, 1977, 21; Davies, 2001.
[47] Mashiko potter Tatsuzo Shimaoka spent three years studying as a ceramics major at the Tokyo technical University, three years apprenticing under Shoji Hamada, and another three years at the Mashiko Pottery Institute. Holmes, 1982, 89, 94. For other examples see also Gen Murata who apprenticed with Hamada for ten years after

philosophical values, constructed by the *Mingei* movement as antithetical to Japanese culture, did not appear to prevent him from being accepted into the Japanese studio pottery community, despite its strong history of associations to Japanese nationalism. Woolsey had to compete in the marketplace with Japanese potters who were steeped in their own community and national traditions. They struggled to balance the value of traditional peasant pottery aesthetics and modes of production with the idea of the self-aware artist-potter and marketplace demands arising from the *yakimoto* (literally fired thing or pottery) boom during the 1960s and 1970s.[48] The values inherent in the kind of pottery revered at this time were external to Woolsey's previous experience, and as his exposure to and interest in pottery up to that time was negligible, his ability to become aesthetically and technically competent occurred in a very short period of time - months rather than the usual years.

Between 1971 and 1974 Woolsey exhibited frequently in various significant Japanese venues. He had solo and group exhibitions at major department stores and galleries in Mito and Tokyo, including Mitsukoshi, Seibu, and Matsuya as well as the Odakyu Halc Gallery, all locations associated with prestigious shopping districts.[49] The Mitsukoshi Department Store was considered the most prestigious exhibition space in Japan, with Seibu following closely as third most important for pottery exhibitions.[50] Japanese ceramic historian Brian Moeran observed that while solo exhibitions in a "handful of prestigious galleries" is important for the "socially ambitious potter," "it is in the art galleries of the countries numerous department stores that most potters try to exhibit and sell their works."[51] Department store galleries assured the potter's works would reach a wide audience as between five and eight thousand people visited a Tokyo department store daily.[52] Woolsey was also selected to participate in the Traditional Crafts Juried Exhibition held at the Mitsokoshi Gallery in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, a space that brought together,

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studying at the Kyoto Art University. Ibid, 81; Naobumi Kubota worked in Taskumoto Pottery for six years before setting up his own pottery. Ibid 98; Hisroshi Seto who also apprenticed at Tsakumoto Pottery noted that the same apprentices were working in the same Mashiko potteries as they had been when he had visited Mashiko four years earlier. Ibid, 110; Takeshi Shiraishi attendee art school part time in Kyoto for here years, apprenticed in pottery for three years in Mashiko, apprenticed in Bizen for one year, apprenticed for another three years in Kyoto and then worked at a kiln in Kasama for one year before becoming an independent potter. Ibid 110-111, 124.

[48] The Robert Yellin Yakimono Gallery, "Kuroda Toen Gallery (Ginza), Japanese Pottery Information Center, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.e-yakimono.net/html/kuroda-ginza.html. See also Moeran, 1997, 140-155.

[49] Woolsey, 1982, 4.

[50] Moeran, 1997, 229.

[51] Brian Moeran, "The Art World of Contemporary Japanese Ceramics," *Journal of Japanese Studies,* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 32.

[52] Ibid.

albeit in a highly politicized process, the foremost "traditional" crafts from all over Japan.[53] Selection for this show meant Woolsey became an "associate member" of the Japan Crafts Association.[54] He was represented as well by the famous Kuroda Toen Gallery in Ginza through a three-person group exhibition in 1973, followed by a solo exhibition in 1975, the year he returned to Saskatchewan.[55] "Kuroda" is a family name for "one of the most influential ceramic galleries Japan has ever known," and the gallery founder, Kuroda Ryogi has been described as very prominent in creating and sustaining the *yakimoto* boom that was fuelled by the increasingly affluent Japanese middle class.[56] Woolsey also participated in two group exhibitions, First Kasama Art Village Exhibition, 1972" and "Second Kasama Art Village Exhibition, 1973" at the Nichido Gallery in Tokyo, founded by Jin Hasagawa in 1928. This famous and prestigious venue was one of the first commercial galleries specializing in art influenced by Western styles.[57] To celebrate this gallery's forty-five years of business in 1972, Hasagawa and his wife, Rinko, founded the Kasama Nichido Museum which houses a display of European and American Impressionist and Modern art, as well as the atelier of the late *Mingei* potter, Rosanjin Kitaoji (1883-1959).[58] Other notable events for Woolsey in Japan included a two-person Yokohama exhibition in 1972 with Mashiko potter Gerd Knäpper, (1943-2012),[59] an immigrant from Germany who had apprenticed at Tsukamoto Pottery with Woolsey, c1968-1969. Knäpper was acquainted with Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada, had studied under Seto potter, Suzuki Seisei

[53] The Tokyo Mitsukoshi or Mitsukoshi was considered the most prestigious department store in Japan in which to exhibit. As well this traditional craft exhibition was the foremost ceramic exhibition in the country and travelled to provincial department stores, assuring a great deal of exposure to a consuming public. Moeran, 1987, 33-34.
[54] Moeran, 1997, 234-235. Moeran also points out the selection process for this exhibition is highly politicized depending on teacher/pupil and master/apprenticeship relationships as well as paid pre-selection consultations with critics. Moeran 1987, 40-41,
[55] Woolsey, 1982, 4. Japanese ceramic historian Brian Moeran noted that the Kuroda Toen Gallery was considered one of the Japan's most prestigious galleries in the 1970s and 1980s, and suggested access as a potter was restricted unless social connections were involved. Moeran, 1987, 32.
[56] Pottery Knowledge Center and The Robert Yellin Yakimono Gallery, "Kuroda Toen Gallery (Ginza), *Japanese Pottery Information Center,* accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.e-yakimono.net/html/kuroda-ginza.html. See also Moeran, 1997, 140-155.
[57] Woolsey, 1982, 4; J.T. Special, "Galerie Nichido in Ginza," *Japan Tourist: Map Tour Travels, Shimane,* 19 April 2012, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://en.japantourist.jp/view/galerie-nichido.
[58] Kasama Nichido Museum of Art*,* accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.nichido-garo.co.jp/museum/english/index.html; Robert Yellin Yakimono Gallery, "Rosanjin Kitaoji: Walking the Path of Art," Japanese Pottery Information Center, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.e-yakimono.net/html/rosanjin-kitaoji-jt.html.
[59] Woolsey, 1982, 4.

and Hamada protégé in Mashiko, Tatsuzo Shimaoka designated a National Treasure in 1996.[60] Woolsey's time at Tsukamoto pottery had put him in contact with another person who helped further his career, Naobumi Kubota, who had been a pottery broker in Tokyo for eighteen years before becoming an apprentice at Tsukamoto at the age of forty-three. Kubota would have been a particular source of knowledge for the westerners, Woolsey and Knäpper, regarding aesthetics, styles, pottery politics and marketing, information to help them negotiate the complex world of Japanese pottery.[61]

Figure 139: Opening day at the Traditional Crafts Exhibition, Mitsukoshi Department Store c 1980

As a potter from Euro-American culture Woolsey immersed himself in *Mingei* pottery aesthetics and techniques. Their roots lay in rural community traditions that according to *Mingei* theory as defined by Yanagi were considered the essence of Japan.[62] Woolsey's made-in-Japan pottery may have been marketed and appreciated in Japan as equal in technique and aesthetics to

[60] Knäpper, a Westerner like Woolsey, settled in the area and built his own studio and kiln. In 1971 he won the first prize in the prestigious biannual national competition for the most traditional Japanese pottery. "Biography," Gerd Knäpper Gallery, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.gerdknaepper.com/biography; David G. London, "Shimaoka Tatsuzo Exhibition, Washington D.C. September 2001," Japanese Pottery Information Center, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.e-yakimono.net/html/shimaoka-tatsuzo-er.html. Moeran notes this exhibition, the Japan Ceramics Exhibition (Nihon Togeiten), sponsored by the Mainichi Newspaper Corporation and held at Daimaru Department Store, above Tokyo Station was extremely important for professional recognition. Moeran, 1987, 34.

[61] Naobumi Kubota quoted in Holmes, 1982, 100, 107.

[62] Kikuchi, 1994, 336

other works of emerging Japanese potters, in other terms "authentic" to the Japanese cultural norms, but it was the result of a cultural hybridity lived by Woolsey. While the pots Woolsey made were accepted within the Japanese art system, there were potential limits to his ability to negotiate this world. Movement further into the Japanese art worlds would have required increased social access to specific cultural groups that dominated collecting and exhibiting, and these required access to large sums of money and a complex knowledge of an obligatory economic reciprocity between department stores and potters, potters and critics, newspapers and department stores, and professional organizations, critics, and potters.[63] Woolsey lived a cultural hybridity, a method of approaching learning and making that combined the individualistic problem solving and embrace of innovation he experienced growing up in Saskatchewan and the Japanese value of mentorship. At the same time, the further he penetrated the system, the more he would experience the limits of multiculturalism within cultural diversity, the "containment of cultural difference," as postulated by post colonialist scholar, Homi Bhabha.[64] At a time in Japanese history when Woolsey's wife, Yoshimi, did not have the right to pass on her Japanese citizenship because she married a non-Japanese, Woolsey's pots, like his son, would always be seen as not quite "authentic" Japanese objects.[65] Even today Woolsey laments that people in Japan are hesitant about buying pottery for the Tea Ceremony from him as a Westerner.[66]

When Woolsey began his own practice in Kasama, two of the traditional techniques he taught himself were *neriage* and *nerikiomi,* both involving layered coloured clays, either in thrown or in slab work, with the two techniques often combined in one object. He pursued this line of inquiry by studying photographs of *neriage* pots made by Matsui Kosei. Kosei, a Kasama resident potter had chosen to live as a Buddhist monk at the Getsusoji Temple in 1957 to devote all his time studying and developing these two particular traditional "folk" processes.[67] In 1993 Kosei was named a National Treasure for his *neriage* work. Woolsey regularly had tea with him in an atmosphere described by Woolsey as a meeting "between potters in town," but as Woolsey

[63] Moeran, 1987, 32-46. Moeran recounts examples where potters were required to arrange sales of their exhibition pots to collectors or galleries in order to keep the sales numbers elevated enough, but because of this were obliged to provide the gallery or collector with a significant number of free future pots. Other examples involve the department store pushing expensive store items onto those who made money from the department store gallery.
[64] Bhabha quoted in Jonathan Rutherford, 1990, 208.
[65] This was corrected in the 1980s under pressure from feminists who assured a law was passed to allow Japanese women married to foreigners the right to pass on their Japanese citizenship to their children. Gordon, 2003, 304.
[66] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.
[67] Modern Japanese Ceramics: A Gallery, "Large Pottery Platter by Japanese LNT Matsui Kosei," accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.modernjapaneseceramics.com/items/932834/item932834store.html.

also remarked, the master guarded his secrets closely,[68] and Woolsey was forced to learn by trial and error. Before he returned to Saskatchewan, Woolsey had established himself within the Japanese pottery community as an important young maker in the modern artist-potter adaptation of the *Mingei* tradition, and exhibited and sold several of his *neriage* and *nerikomi* vessels.[69] Woolsey's pots brought together three levels of hybridity: *Mingei* as a hybrid philosophy; the work of artist-potters of Mashiko as a hybrid expression of traditional pottery methods encountering consumer demands in the modern marketplace; and a cultural hybridity that brought together the Woolsey's experiences of Canada, or even more specifically Saskatchewan, and Japan.

Murals, *Mingei* and Saskatchewan Studio Pottery

The *Mingei* philosophy Woolsey transported and translated to his Saskatchewan pottery practice was steeped in the ideas of wholesomeness, truth to materials and the kind of vitality inherent in an object made through repetitive work as one of many. His Japanese training meant he worked an electric wheel in the Japanese style, attempted to formulate clay bodies using local clay, judged his work not for technical perfection but for the "life" in it and focussed his energies on making ritualistic functional wares for the Tea Ceremony.[70] Woolsey's approach closely adhered to Yanagi's twelve criteria for beauty that overlapped in many ways with the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement.[71] These criteria, disseminated to the West through Yanagi's 1972 book, *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*, can be summarized by: beauty of handcraft, beauty of intimacy, beauty of use/function, beauty of health, beauty of naturalness, beauty of simplicity, beauty of tradition, beauty of irregularity, beauty of inexpensiveness, beauty of plurality, beauty of sincerity and honest toil, beauty of selflessness and anonymity. [72] While, without a doubt, there are contradictions in this list with the real life challenges of a mid-

[68] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013; arttougei さんのチャンネル"Japan Ceramic Art Matsui Kosei." Accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKlZa7rMiOA; Samuel J. Lurie and Beatrice L. Chang, *Fired With Passion: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics,* (New York: Eagle Art, 2006), 215, 224.
[69] For a detailed discussion of the tensions arising from the philosophical premises of the *Mingei* tradition and real pottery practices at the level of supplies, making and marketing see Morean's study of the Onta Pottery. Moeran, 1997.
[70] Charles R. Watrall, 1977, 21-22.
[71] For a thorough and enlightening discussion on this see Kikuchi, 2004, 53-62.
[72] Ibid, 53. For a detailed discussion of each of these concepts see Yanagi, 1989.

to late-twentieth century potter in both Japan and Saskatchewan, certain ideals did remain important in the functional work of Woolsey.

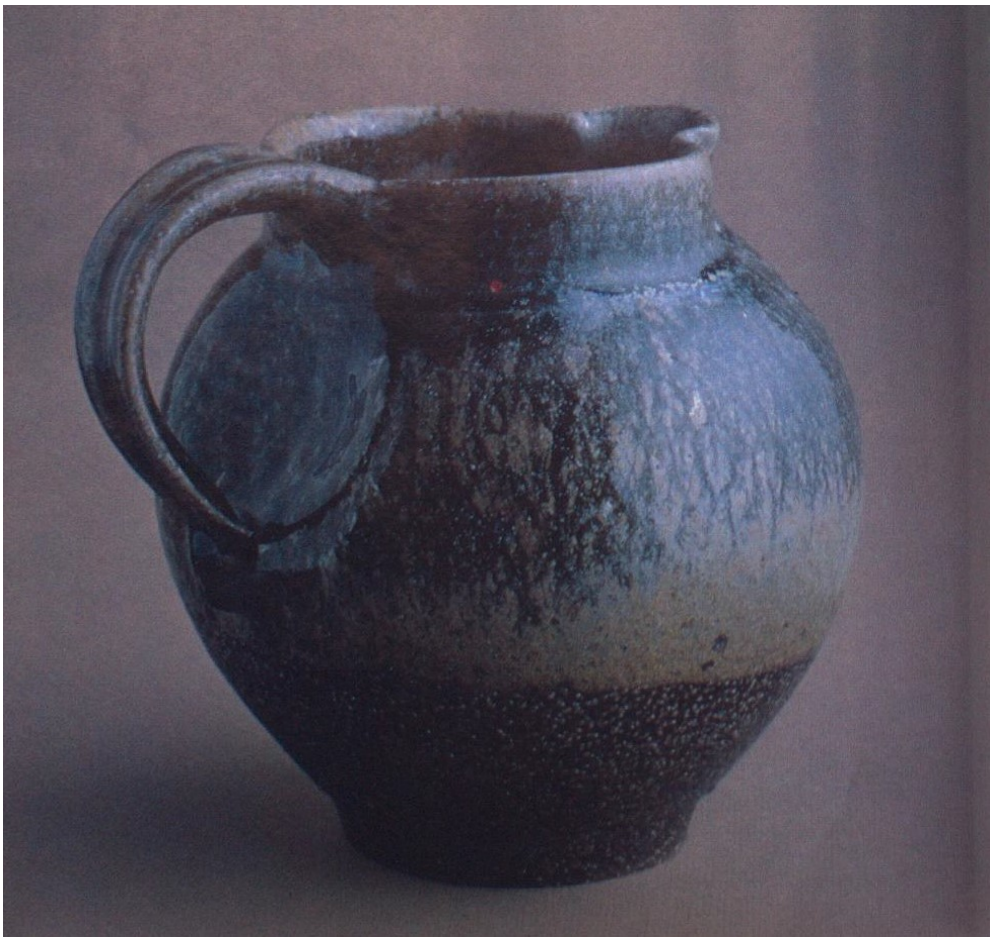

Figure 140: Stoneware pitcher, Randy Woolsey,glazed and fired in the salt-glazing chamber of Woolsey's climbing kiln, H: 8 in. c 1981

I suggest Yanagi's *Mingei* ideals of beauty were translated into Woolsey's tenth-floor mural, "wheat field." Intimacy emerges through a familiar view of the field and the inclusion of detail associated with personal narratives such as a cross, groundhog, bird, and butterfly. Woolsey's sometimes-obvious manipulation of clay and the unglazed terra cotta ceramic speak to the values of naturalness, simplicity, and anonymity. "Beauty" of the traditional or "folk" images he employed derives from a communal identity of the image linked to traditional expressions in the Saskatchewan folk painting community. The murals' unexpected shapes combine with a roughness of character emerging from the making process to evoke a beauty that rests on irregularity. This accentuates the importance of the handmade mark arising from the

conjunction of the handmade tool, the vagaries of the material and the maker's gestural interaction with it at that moment in time. The ideal of honest toil expresses itself through an implied close encounter with the cultivated wheat field, simplicity of the red clay, and the obvious processes of fabrication left as marks that celebrate handcraft. Here, "folk" values of ceramics in Japan are combined with the "folk" imagery of Saskatchewan.

The actual processes of handcrafted fabrication, an essential component of *Mingei*, are left as marks in both these tenth-floor murals. "Wheat fields" bears the traces of rhythmically hitting the clay surface with the edge of a wooden dowel to imprint the pattern of wheat stalks, the tops of which are formed by hand rolled coils impressed with patterns to resemble grain heads. The represented lumps of earth at the base clearly have finger marks that have compacted the chunks of clay and flattened them onto the mural's surface. Beyond the stalks the fallow earth has been sculptured with individual twists of thick clay, rolled, sliced, and pressed. A darker pile of "rocks" on the upper edge of the mural has been assembled from clay whose different moisture content when stretched imparts textural variation. Sculptural additions such as the animals, insects, birds and clouds have been simply constructed for frontal viewing. The clouds originate from coils that were torn, pinched, folded, and patted, and two that were broken in mounting are glued together. An impression of spontaneity and naiveté in the composition is imparted through Woolsey's working methods. The mural was cut into regular sizes that respect the mural's overall pentagon form, making each tile slightly different in shape and size. This mural brings to a Saskatoon audience the *Mingei* philosophy of eschewing the preciousness of over-worked objects. But this approach could be confused with sloppiness or lack of skill, neither of which fits the profile of this ceramicist.

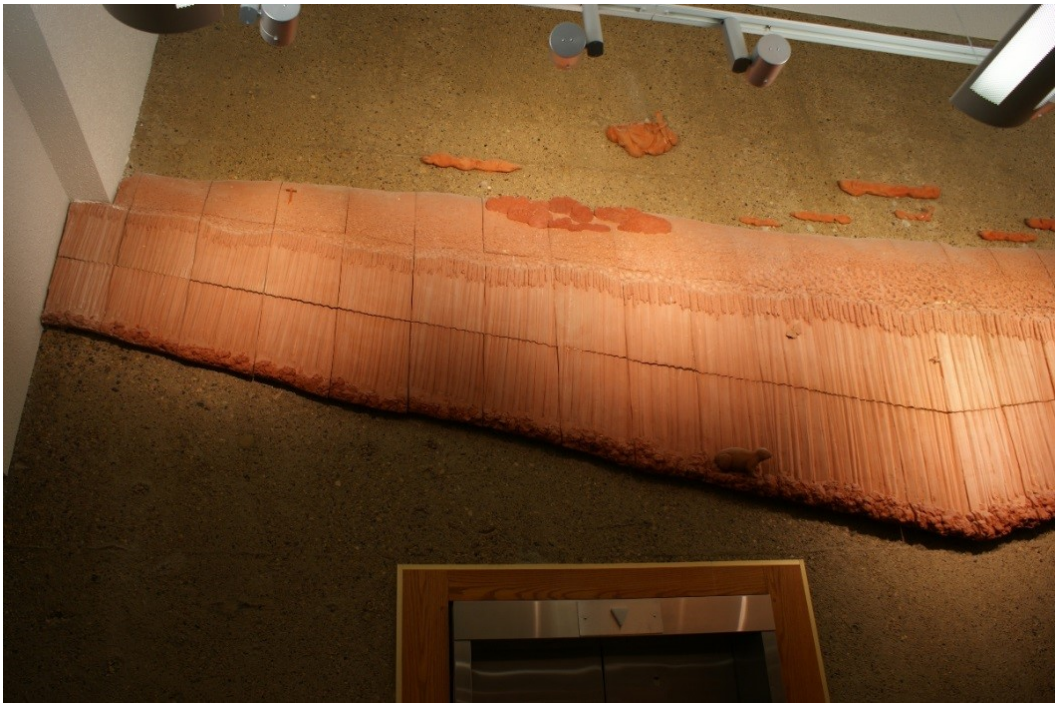

Figure 141: Detail of Prairie mural, south wall elevators, Randy Woolsey, showing tile shapes and perspective strategies

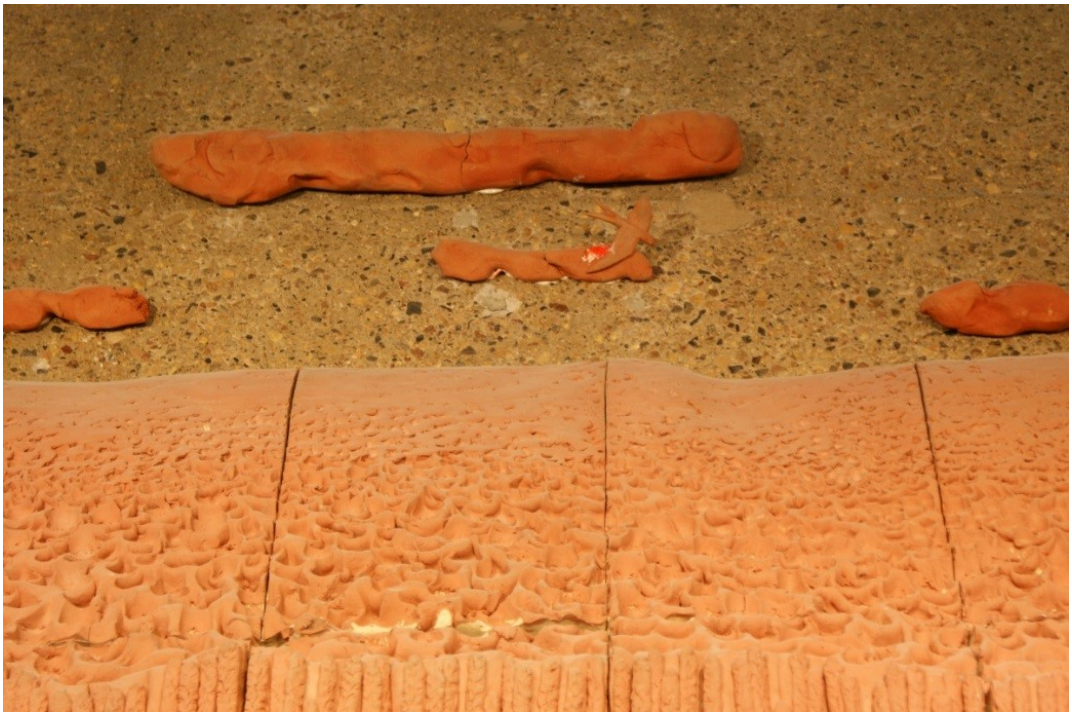

Figure 142: Detail of Prairie mural, south wall elevators, Randy Woolsey, showing textures, broken cloud, glue, repairs and perspective strategies

Woolsey's mastery of Japanese technique and aesthetics is more evident in the "sun" mural opposite "wheat fields," built using the *nerikomi* technique he had initially studied in Japan and continued to explore in Saskatchewan. Both *neriage* and *nerikomi,* techniques whose traditions lie deep within the history of Japanese folk pottery, entail the manipulation of layers of coloured clay in slightly different ways: *Nerikomi* involves mixing clay colours by pressing them together, while *neriage* means mixing them by pulling up different colours in the act of throwing.[73] Both these actions are actually involved in much wheel-thrown *neriage*, such as Woolsey executed during the 1970s, and seen in his two coloured "Salt Glaze Neriage Weed Vase," illustrated in *Arts West* in 1977.[74] Woolsey also worked with *nerikomi* in his plate forms,[75] and the design and technical success of this "sun" mural is the result of many experiments and experience with these much smaller works. For this 1981 mural he decided to expand his format from objects about ten to fifteen inches (thirty to forty centimetres) in diameter to one six feet in diameter.[76] A comparison between this mural and a much smaller contemporary *nerikomi* plate with similar colour movements by American potter, John Quimby, is useful for understanding the skilfulness involved in developing Woolsey's massive 1981wall "plate." Part of the base clay is carefully coloured through wedging with a stain or oxide that will give the appropriate contrast and shade, taking into consideration the fluxing affect the added colour might have when combined with the contrasting clay in a firing. This consideration is crucial as an inappropriate amount of colourant can impede the surfaces from adhering. Sometimes two different coloured clays are worked up in addition to the base clay. The blocks of clay are individually sliced and the coloured slabs are piled alternately one upon the other. This rectangular form is then made into a wedge, and four of these are joined as a "round loaf." The "loaf" is compacted and the different clay surfaces are fused by pressing inwards from the rim. This circular form may then be rolled or sliced and the top surface is scraped or cut away to

[73] Robin Hopper, "You Say Neriage, I Say Nerikomi…No Matter What You Call it, Mixing Colored Clays Makes for Gorgeous Pottery Surfaces," *Ceramic Arts Daily,* April 29, 2013, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://ceramicartsdaily.org/pottery-making-techniques/wheel-throwing-techniques/you-say-neriage-i-say-nerikomino-matter-what-you-call-it-mixing-colored-clays-makes-for-gorgeous-pottery-surfaces/. This technique was also practiced in Europe and Britain and in this Western tradition related to millefiori glassware and British agateware produced in the eighteenth century.
[74] Charles R. Watrall, 1977, 22.
[75] Claire Watrall, "Randy Woolsey," *Ceramics Monthly* 30, no.9 (Nov. 1982): 38-40.
[76] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

reveal the crisp pattern.[77] Working coloured clays together to create such patterns was traditionally important as an alternative to the time-consuming and therefore expensive application of complex patterns of coloured glazes, but it also allowed the elements of form and colour to be entirely integrated, an aesthetic associated with Western modernism.

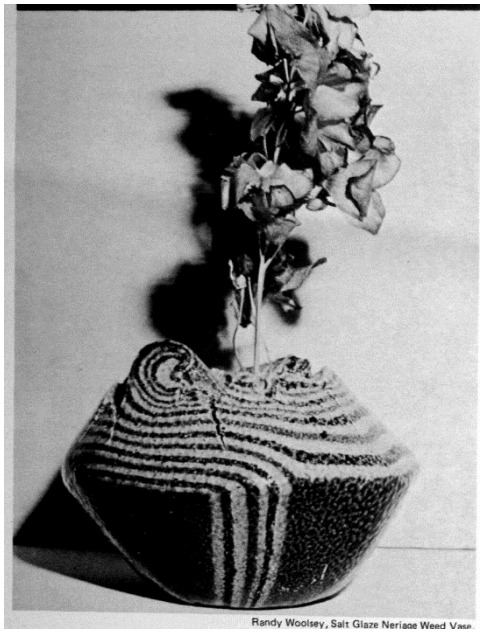

Figure143: *Neriagi* vase, stoneware, salt glaze, Randy Woolsey, c1977

Figure 144: Nerikomi Plate, Randy Woolsey, c 1981,
Unglazed, three colours of stoneware clays, handbuilt, D:12 in.

[77] This is a summary of the process as described by John Quimby. "John Quimby, 'Neriage Demo 28,' photos," John Quimby Ceramics, accessed 1 Nov. 2013, http://www.johnquimbyceramics.com/Neriage/Neriage.html.

Figure 145: Disc mural, north wall elevators, Randy Woolsey, *nerikomi* technique

Woolsey believes confidence in his ability to tackle any problems that might arise in such a scale-change in the traditional *nerikomi* technique resulted from his success with the Sturdy-Stone Centre exterior mural he had realized with Hardy. His challenge was to adapt tools and develop body movements that would enable him to translate a practice usually reserved for functional objects to a mural six feet in diameter. The slab roller purchased for the exterior mural was put into use as a starting point for this project to produce the disc of base clay. The slabs were joined and laid onto the floor, six inches thick in the middle, thinning out at the circumference. Onto this he lay a one-half inch thick layer of *nerikomi* patterned three-coloured clay strips, in iron red, a celadon green, and the natural light coloured clay. Woolsey formed these stacks and cut the colours until he had a three-foot long mass of vertical patterned strips. He rolled from the thick to what would be the thin end and then flipped to the other side to get

the opposite movement. He describes the process as being intensely physical, requiring much power to push the clay together, thin it out, and then adhere it to the base clay. The movements of the coloured clay in this mural make visible the surges of energy and power emerging from the interactions among potter, clay and tool.

Figure 146a: Nerikomi preparation
strips of coloured clay assembled in a block

Figure 146b: *Nerikomi* preparation
block ready for cutting

Figure 146c: Nerikomi preparation
sectioned block

Figure 146d: Nerikomi preparation
four wedges assembled

Figure 146e: Nerikomi preparation: wedges pushed together and rolled; uneven top sliced away to show crisp pattern

For this part of the operation Woolsey used a special *soba* (buckwheat noodle) "rolling pin" that was three feet long and three inches thick. He had brought this essential tool back from Japan when he moved, as Canadian dowels with a smaller diameter would distort and make the rolled clay uneven in thickness, and Western rolling pins were entirely unsuitable for the task. *Soba*-making actually uses techniques and movements similar to making *nerikomi,* from the mixing of the dry ingredients and the water, whether buckwheat flour or clay, to kneading the mixture, rolling it into a circle and finally folding and cutting into the layers. [78] The stretching of the soba paste requires a particular placement of the hands on the roller as the dough is rotated in a clockwise or counter clockwise circular motion dependent upon which step is involved. These principles and the movements are transferable to clay, and the complex layers of circular motions evident in this mural suggest an affinity to making *soba*. The control possible with the *soba* roller meant that thirty-two strips of coloured clays spiral dynamically from the centre.[79] Woolsey could easily have acquired familiarity with the movements attached to the sequential steps involved in *nerikomi* through participating in the making of these noodles. Irregular curvilinear "chevrons" created by the rolled intersections of the coloured strips of clay suggest the force of wind, and as such the alternating light and dark ribbons not only seem to be sun rays or solar flares, but also the shifting prairie grasses flickering in lights and shadows. The

[78] Roots Simple low tech home tech, Mr. Homegrown, "How to Make Soba Noodles," 12 April 2012, "Soba Lesson Part 1, Soba Lesson Part 2, Soba Lesson Part 3," video and translation Mariko Eguchi, with Soba Master Minori Komatsubara, accessed 15 May 2014, http://www.rootsimple.com/2012/04/how-to-make-soba-noodles/.
[79] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

movement of the colour emerged from the movement of Woolsey's body as he manipulated the long rolling pin that encountered resistance in the clay.

Figure 147: Chef Akila Inouye of Tsukiji Soba Academy,
using a soba noodle rolling pin

Figure 148: Chef Akila Inouye of Tsukiji Soba Academy,
slicing layers of soba paste to form noodles

In a true late twentieth-century fusion of traditions Woolsey applied techniques closely attached to *Mingei* functional works and traditional homemade *soba*, considered a "a soul food" of Japan, to the realm of the monumental required for public architectural projects.[80] The sheer size and the attendant difficulty in manipulating the large amount of clay required procedures and tools designed for smaller works, and as such make this work especially powerful in terms of

[80] Tokyo Metropolitan Government, "Restaurants with Multilingual Menus," Japanese Dishes Popular Around the World, Soba- a soul-food of Tokyo," accessed 15 May, 2014. http://menu-tokyo.jp/menu/english/best/soba.html. This website also points out soba making originated during the Tokugawa period.

ceramic technique. This technique was practiced by only a few potters in North America, and even in studio ceramic literature received little coverage. Among the general public who made use of this building, it could be assumed few would be aware of the philosophy or processes of making involved in this mural. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai observed, lack of knowledge bears upon the cultural role objects play as part of a commodity system and cannot be separated from questions of technology, production and trade.[81] I suggest this is true of Woolsey's tenth floor murals. Ultimately their social value within cultural, economic and even political regimes is impacted by such questions, and ultimately these kinds of awareness impact their survival. Although *neriagi* and *nerikomi* were practiced by other North American ceramicists at the time and their work was covered in the influential and widely distributed *Ceramics Monthly*, it was considered marginal in the pottery world and even more so among the general public. Such works involved functional objects: plates, vases, jars and bowls, much smaller in scale than Woolsey's monumental *nerikomi* mural.[82] Nonetheless, despite the Sturdy-Stone audience's probable lack of knowledge about the finer art historical points of *Mingei,* this audience for Woolsey's "sun" would be aware of the energy imparted by the swirling, rhythmic motions of the mural that contrast with the rectangular forms, angularity, and muted colours of the hallway.

Postcolonial Considerations

Woolsey's murals speak of the transcultural, translational and transnational experience in ceramics that was so prevalent in the last part of the twentieth century.[83] Kikuchi attributes this international interest in traditional Japanese ceramics associated with the aesthetics of the Tea Ceremony to the process of "Reverse Orientalism," whereby Yanagi, along with Hamada and Leach, exported the hybrid *Mingei* theory to the Occident in the early postwar decades as representative of the "authentic" and "spiritual" Orient, an Orientalist view of Japan active since

[81] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: commodities and politics of value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 34-35.
[82] Other than the Watrall article on Woolsey in 1982 several exhibition reviews included examples of *neriagi* and *nerikomi*: "Neriagi and Nerikomi Show," *Ceramics Monthly* 30, no.4 (April 1982): 77, 79; "Ohio Clay Workers," *Ceramics Monthly* 30, no.5 (May 1982): 80-81; Victor Brosz, "Les Manning at Banff," *Ceramics Monthly,* 30, no.6 (Summer 1982): 73-79. The number of articles at this time indicates how the method was then gaining popularity among North American potters.
[83] I have borrowed the terms translational and transnational from Homi Bhabha's discussion of culture in postcolonial terms as a "strategy of survival." Bhabha, 1994, 172. Kikuchi uses this terminology when discussing the hybridity of *Mingei*. Kikuchi, 1997, 353.

the nineteenth century.[84] At the same time, in light of the postwar American occupation of Japan, the Western attitude of becoming an expert in Japanese pottery by having unrestricted access to Japanese cultural knowledge can certainly be understood as a form of Orientalism as identified by Said and tied to cultural appropriation by the West. The Allied, and particularly American, occupation of Japan facilitated Western access to Japanese culture and interest in Zen Buddhism. Postcolonial scholars Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman point out Western Enlightenment's "universalizing will to knowledge… feeds Orientalism's will to power," and its "enormous appetite for forms of knowledge," including those artistic, is tied to the gathering of knowledge and thus power, because of the West's "ability to enter or examine other countries at will."[85] While we are no longer in the period of the Enlightenment, Said points out Orientalism persists "as a created body of theory and practice…a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness."[86] Woolsey's murals existed because of an Occidental history of Orientalist practices, but can be understood through the nuances of post-colonial theory.

Orientalism in Japan can be traced to the mid-nineteenth century when the country was forced into contact with America and Europe, resulting in a significant imbalance of political, economic, and cultural power. Through a show of military might in 1854, American Commodore Matthew Perry compelled Japan to open its ports to Western powers. By 1858 Japan had made arrangements with several Euro-American countries, described by historian Andrew Gordon as "'unequal treaties' humiliating in theory and in practice [that] imposed a semicolonial status upon Japan." They also fuelled Japanese nationalism and provoked it into becoming a player on the international stage.[87] By the early-twentieth century Japan's imperialist and colonialist practices in Korea, China and throughout South East Asia resulted in its adoption of its own brand of imperialism and colonialism. The transplantation of *Mingei* into the West cannot be discussed without taking these social/political/economic conditions into consideration. The modern identity of Japan as an industrial and military nation in the Occidental model was formed

[84] Kikuchi, 2004, 297-98. Brian Moeran uses the term "inverse Orientalism" to describe how the "Japanese now promulgate their art and aesthetics as part of a new Eastern 'spiritualism' that is seen to be vastly superior to Western 'materialism'. See Brian Moeran, "Bernard Leach and the Japanese Folk Craft Movement: The Formative Years," *Journal of Design History* 2, no. 2/3, (1989), 139.
[85] Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, "Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: An Introduction," in Williams and Chrisman, 1994, 8.
[86] Edward Said, "From Orientalism," in Williams and Chrisman, 1994, 133.
[87] Gordon, 2003, 49-50, 59.

simultaneously with Yanagi's development of *Mingei* theory. Kikuchi claims Yanagi's development of *Mingei,* associated with the appreciation of folk crafts from Korea and China as well as Okinawa along with Japan, can actually be understood as "Oriental Orientalism." She explains:

> Yanagi also created another Other in Asia by articulating cultural differences between Japan as 'Self' and Asia as 'Other'. Even within Japan, finer cultural differentiation is articulated between the centre and the peripheries. Essentialisation and racialization of cultures was repeated. *Mingei* theory developed as the way to strengthen the Self-identity of Japanese culture by making an Oriental cultural map centred on Japan with fine contours of cultural differences within Japan and in Asia. In Orientalism, the Orient including Japan was an epistemological object which had to be observed, studied, collected, taxonomised and preserved. Japan also repeated this cultural politicisation within the Orient, by projecting Japanese-style Orientalism translated and appropriated from Orientalism. I have called this Oriental Orientalism. It took the form of a grand interdisciplinary project in which knowledge in the social sciences and culture was accumulated in the modern nation of Japan, with the involvement of politicians, academics and ordinary travellers/emigrants.[88]

Kikuchi maintains Yanagi "creatively appropriated various narratives embedded in the discourse of 'Orientalism' and reinforced them through his hybrid *Mingei* theory and the *Mingei* movement."[89]

After Japan's own territorial and economic expansion program culminating in its resounding defeat at the end of the Second World War, another era of American imperialism emerged. Gordon explains conditions of surrender in 1945 were "labelled a 'second unequal treaty' [that] would be subject to fierce debate and political struggle for decades." Between 1945 and 1952 the American government imposed a series of reforms on Japan including a new constitution and transformations affecting the military, education, land distribution and use, and business and labour practices. While not all Japanese were opposed to these new directions, they were most certainly forced on the country by an occupying power.[90] Even when the occupation ended, Okinawa remained indefinitely under American control, a situation Gordon suggests many Japanese see as either "a violation of Japanese neutrality" or a "betrayal of its

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[88] Kikuchi, 2004, 123. The distinction between the centre and peripheries in Japan, or the "orientalizing" of another subgroup within a country has been identified as "internal Orientalizing." See Carla Jones and Anne Marie Leshkowich, "Introduction: The Globalization of Asian Dress: Re-Orienting Fashion or Re-Orientalizing Asia?" in *Re-Orienting Fashion,* ed. Sandra Niessen, Anne Marie Leshkowich, and Carla Jones, (New York: Berg, 2003), 26-29.
[89] Kikuchi, 2004, 43.
[90] Gordon, 2003, 242, 230-241.

sovereignty." Despite this long-term occupation, the economic boom resulting from the Korean War definitively restarted the Japanese economy, eventually making Japan the world's third largest economy in 1973.[91] It was from within this postwar chaos and economic boom that the popularity of the Japanese *Mingei* Movement became entrenched in Japan and the West.

Kikuchi argues Yanagi continued to use *Mingei* in the postwar years to promote Japan as an independent nation by sharing with the world what he considered to be its most important cultural contributions, its approach to Buddhism and its art. She suggests:

> He … constructed a Japanese cultural national identity conforming to the image Orientalism projected, but at the same time, he projected his own variation of Orientalism, … *Mingei* theory was created in the context of the double mechanism of Orientalism and 'Oriental Orientalism', wherein a Japanese cultural national identity was moulded both as an Oriental identity (a counterpart of Occidental identity) and as a Japanese identity (a counterpart of the other Oriental identity).[92]

Yanagi used *Mingei* to promote Japanese nationalism within the country: Japan embraced the consumption of this pottery that looked to the pre-industrial Japanese past to create a modern future; at the same time the movement attracted potters who questioned the very Western consumer values that fuelled it.[93] Japan's post-1945 branding took place at both the national and international levels. The new international image that *Mingei* projected of a spiritual country that placed much value on its arts, appreciated within a modern and a traditional context, counteracted the militarism and colonialism with which *Mingei* had been associated during the previous decades.

Western potters' interest in Japanese pottery can be attributed partially to the dissemination of Japanese culture effected through the American occupation, and to a vigorous postwar *Mingei* marketing campaign. According to Kikuchi, Yanagi's postwar contribution was "the integration of *Mingei* theory into the main stream of international Modernism by exporting his hybrid philosophy of crafts as an 'authentic' Oriental theory," promoting a particular vision of beauty that involved the fusion of Buddhist aesthetics with Japanese craft practices, in what Kikuchi calls a "Reverse Orientalism."[94] Yanagi created a binary list of Occidental and Oriental aesthetics privileging the "Oriental" Buddhist ones, thereby reversing the usual hierarchy based

[91] Gordon, 2003 242, 246.
[92] Kikuchi, 2004, 197, 198.
[93] Holmes 1982, 13-14 and 69-70.
[94] Kikuchi, 2004, 197.

on the Enlightenment's concepts of civilization. With these ideas, he propelled *Mingei* into the West. With respect to pottery, Kikuchi suggests, "The perfect combination of Yanagi's 'Buddhist aesthetics,' its adaptation by Leach and Hamada's demonstration which literally make *Mingei* theory visible, has almost created its own cult movement."[95] Yanagi's approach to beauty in his later writings emphasized that in an enlightened state the concepts of beauty and ugliness were actually undifferentiated, and this kind of beauty could be found "created by craftsmen who are in a state of non-dual entirety," labouring within a tradition to make handmade objects.[96] According to Kikuchi, Yanagi framed his hybridized and highly nationalized *Mingei* as a unique Japanese contribution to world culture.[97] *Mingei* became an important philosophical export that also brought tourists into the country helping the economy: while contributing to international modernist aesthetics, it also emphasized Japan as "other" to the West, an "other" to be emulated and consumed. Yanagi's strategy to popularize a modern approach to the Tea Ceremony using contemporary *Mingei* objects further "Orientalized and Japanized" *Mingei* theory.[98] By making both Japan and his ideas attractive, the perception of Japan as a threatening militaristic/ industrial/ imperialist state of the first half of the twentieth century was modified to one whose contribution to the world lay in its art and non-aggressive religion, Buddhism. This new Japan, expressed in part by *Mingei,* was rendered even more nonviolent through *Mingei's* link with domestic and rural spaces, and the private and intimate nature of the Tea Ceremony, often performed in its twentieth-century revival by women.[99]

Yanagi and Hamada and other *Mingei* followers were active in promoting their own identity, skilfully negotiating the geo-political landscape to suggest a cultural superiority, or at the very least an alternative to Western economic and spiritual values, based on particular aesthetics and practices. Through this excellent marketing campaign to a young and disenchanted Western audience, Woolsey's assimilation into that world was widely understood as an immersion into a cultural system superior to that of the West. When he returned to Saskatchewan

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[95] Kikuchi, 2004 198.
[96] Ibid, 200.
[97] Ibid, 201.
[98] Ibid, 204.
[99] For a history of the Tea Ceremony that addresses changing gender and class relations see Beatrice Hohenegger, ed., *Steeped in History: The Art of Tea,* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2009). Such an effective rebranding is similar to what John Chaimov discusses as the "rehabilitated image of Germans" through the marketing of the childlike and diminutive porcelain Hummel Figures to the United States during the Allied occupation of post-war Germany. See John Chaimov, "Hummel Figurines: Molding a Collectible Germany," *Journal of Material Culture* 6, no. 1 (March 2001): 53.

with these practices and philosophy, along with his Japanese wife and their son, he was bringing a gift of lived Japanese *Mingei* values and ceramic experience to the already entrenched Leach approach.[100] As much as Woolsey could experience challenges in authenticating himself in Japan, he returned to Saskatchewan as an authenticated potter in the Leach/*Mingei* tradition as practiced by Hamada, carrying the *Mingei* message with him as a cultural translation. The tenth-floor murals, more so than the "Caveman's Bible," was Woolsey's first monumental public statement that specifically spoke to this hybrid experience. In these murals Woolsey integrated Yanagi's undifferentiated values of beauty and ugliness, seeking to translate them into a Western architectural, spatial, and social context.

The coming-into-being and reception of the tenth-floor murals was involved in intense cross-cultural movements tied to various visions of nationalism and culture. As murals in a Saskatchewan government building and as part of a program to highlight Saskatchewan artists and their art, Woolsey's murals marry the aesthetics and techniques of Japanese pottery and Saskatchewan folk art. They are quintessential cultural hybrids, and recognize the nature of Woolsey's own family; Woolsey had returned to Saskatchewan because he thought its multicultural nature could assure a more normal existence for his young Japanese-Canadian family.[101] In fact and unbeknownst to Woolsey, the Japanese-Canadian community was involved at this time in a protracted fight for redress and compensation for their internment in the Second World War. Public access was finally granted by the federal government in the 1970s to files regarding the treatment of the Japanese-Canadian population during this period.

> In her research "The Politics of Racism," historian Ann Sunahara revealed what many in the Japanese Canadian community had felt all along - the Japanese in Canada were never a threat to national security. This fact was confirmed by military and RCMP documents. Rather, the government's wartime actions were spurred on by the anti-Asian, and racist sentiments of the time. The war provided the government with the opportunity to use political means to respond to the "Japanese" problem.[102]

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[100] A Saskatchewan example of the importance of the Japanese connection whereby Canadian potters visited Japan and sometimes studied there for short periods can be seen in the experience of Jack Sures who spent six months in Japan in 1966 funded by a Canada Council grant. The author personally experienced the public's perception regarding the importance of living the Japanese connection while participating in exhibitions of her own pottery work. She was questioned on numerous occasions whether she had visited Japan.

[101] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

[102] Canadian Race Relations Foundation, "From Racism to Redress: The Japanese-Canadian Experience," 2, accessed 31 May 2014, http://www.crr.ca/divers-files/en/pub/faSh/ePubFaShRacRedJap.pdf. See as well Alexandra Bailey, "Japanese Internment During WWII," University of Alberta Centre for Constitutional Studies, Equality Rights Section 15 (1 Dec. 2008), accessed 31 May 2014,

This of course ultimately led to a formal government apology and compensation, but revealed limits in Canada to the multicultural ideal that had so attracted Woolsey and Yoshimi in 1975.

A question that must be addressed is that of Orientalism and cultural appropriation in this work. As a North American, Woolsey was able to "penetrate" into Japanese culture of the *Mingei* Movement at its most intimate and highly valued spiritual level, receiving instruction and recognition from those who founded it. As he points out, his identity as a Westerner certainly helped his success at some level,[103] particularly as his interest validated Yanagi's and Hamada's program of *Mingei* exportation. At the same time, his own cultural background was judged inferior in light of Yanagi's list of Occidental/Oriental cultural characteristics, and he had to reconfigure many of his own cultural values to conform to his new situation. However, Woolsey's impetuous choice of Mashiko and Kasama as places to learn and settle partially mitigated Yanagi's hierarchical cultural dichotomy, as Mashiko was home to an emerging artist-potter category that challenged the purity of the *Mingei* practices.

When Woolsey returned to Saskatchewan after seven years of making ceramics in Japan he returned as the provincial potter most imbued in these ceramic traditions and practices. His success in Japan validated both the already entrenched Leach aesthetic, which reciprocally provided an aesthetic climate within which he could produce, and the newly minted Saskatchewan crafts guild where he became an active and influential member. Japanese pottery was considered the epitome of art pottery because, in fact, it was highly regarded in Japan as "art" fetching lofty prices only dreamed of in North America with accompanying prestige for their makers. This high regard for pottery was assumed in the West to be contingent only on cultural aesthetics, disregarding the complex manoeuverings of the Japanese "art world" that over most of the twentieth century involved collectors, philosophers, pottery brokers, galleries, department stores, critics, newspapers, craft organizations, and museums.[104] Woolsey brought the "centre" of the pottery world to Saskatchewan, not just as someone who had briefly toured in Japan visiting the traditional village potteries for a few weeks, but as someone who had learned the language, and lived, trained, and worked there for many years. In this way, I argue the tenth-

http://ualawccsprod.srv.ualberta.ca/ccs/index.php/constitutional-issues/the-charter/equality-rights-section-15/740-japanese-canadian-internment-during-world-war-ii.

[103] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

[104] Moeran, 1997, 228-242.

floor murals are agents of "Reverse Orientalism." The large sun mural can certainly be read as appropriate Saskatchewan content as the sun that blazes down in the summer and is low, weak, and very welcome during the long winter;[105] it is, however, also the sun of the "Land of the Rising Sun."

After the "sun" and "wheatfield"

Upon completion of these tenth-floor murals the SCC and the SAB acknowledged the excellence of Woolsey's work, his organizational skills and his international profile. The SCC nominated Woolsey in 1982 for the Saidye Bronfman Award,[106] and the following year the SAB granted him a $10,000 Senior Arts Award, which he used to tour Europe.[107] The success of Woolsey's two mural projects also brought him to the attention of the Ottawa culture mavens. In the early 1980s, he was contacted by the National Capital Commission about creating large-scale ceramic murals in Ottawa in line with the commission's mandate to "improve the National Capital Region in accordance with its national significance." This was mandated through the 1950 Gréber Plan that had recommended the installation of "large-scale works that dramatically altered the National Capital Region." This plan was implemented in 1958 with the passage of the National Capital Act and the establishment of the National Capital Commission whose mandate included constructing projects and working with other private and public agencies[108] In the early 1980s Woolsey travelled to Ottawa, took photographs of potential sites, and made some studies, but ultimately abandoned the project. He decided that to continue along such a path would require a transformation of the way he thought about clay, and a complete alteration of working methods involving a large crew and a larger studio with more equipment: in general he would have been forced to abandon his philosophy rooted in *Mingei* values and his love of making objects for the Tea Ceremony to adopt a pressured lifestyle.[109] This was inimical with his

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[105] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.
[106] SCC Board Meeting, June 1 1982, Book 5, Saskatchewan Crafts Council Archives. In 1982 the Saidye Bronfman Award for most outstanding Canadian craftsperson was won by Quebec painter-weaver Micheline Beauchemin. Canadian Museum of History, The Bronfman Collection Virtual Gallery, "Masters of the Crafts," accessed 15 Nov. 2013. http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/arts/bronfman/mcintroe.shtml.
[107] Email from Noreen Neu, Visual and Media Arts Consultant, Saskatchewan Arts Board to author, 19 August 2013; Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.
[108] "History," About the NCC Ottawa-Gatineau: Canada's Capital Region, accessed 14 Nov. 2013, http://www.ncc-ccn.gc.ca/about-ncc.
[109] Charles R. Watrall, 1977, 21.

Japanese training and his lifestyle choices.[110] In 1989 Woolsey returned to Kasama to pot. He still resides there and is currently struggling to recover from the March 11, 2011 earthquake damage to his home, studio and kilns.

Figure 149: black nanagama teabowl, Randy Woolsey nd

Figure 150: Shino Sake Cup, Randy Woolsey nd,

Conclusion

This chapter recognizes skill as the "coming to mind" of the materials and tools is triggered by a variety of conditions. One of these was Woolsey's repatriation to Saskatchewan

[110] Woolsey, 6 Nov. 2013.

from Japan, accompanied by his young family. As a successful "Japanese" potter transplanted within a "new" pottery culture he had not encountered previously, Woolsey was in some ways a cultural immigrant. His global working and traveling experience precipitated the stylistic and technical cross-references clearly evident in the tenth-floor murals that speak of multicultural ceramic experiences both in Japan and Canada. How Woolsey integrated the two cultures required skill in defining key and identifiable components of each one that could be coherently fused and communicated to his specific audience. He turned to representations of the landscape in folk art styles with which he was familiar. To appreciate the subtlety of the manipulation of the clay in his unglazed low relief murals requires knowledge of a cultural code unfamiliar to most Canadians, but familiar to the Japanese middleclass public for which Woolsey had heretofore geared his work. Woolsey's stated preference for making bowls and vases for the Tea Ceremony during his years in Saskatchewan, suggests he translated the aesthetics of this multi-sensory experience involved in a private ceremony to a public space.[111] Such a transposition required Woolsey to re-evaluate what exactly, within this particular aesthetic and spiritual practice, was communicable to a monumental mural project in a public space. Monumentality, especially in the *nerikomi* "sun" mural affected his handling of materials and tools, requiring much improvisation, as suggested by anthropologist Tim Ingold. The relationships between the treatments of *soba* dough to the processes of clay preparation in *nerikomi*, and the relationship between the nerikomi patterns in plates and the sun disk mural emphasize the importance of improvisation where practices grow from previously acquired knowledge, rather than talking about the rupture suggested in innovation. In this case his awareness of equipment limitations, body movements, strength adjustments, and clay composition modified a technique and style habitually realized in an intimate scale into a monumental one.

The tenth-floor murals translated Woolsey's experience in Japan, lived as personal day-to-day encounters and events, into his credentials as a professional potter in Saskatchewan. They also became agents that transformed the theoretical multicultural message diffused by the government into a physical object. The accepted, even promoted, juxtapositions of Saskatchewan "folk" and abstract modernism in the mid-1970s formed the basis for these murals, adding another incarnation of the "folk"-"fine" coupling, one not based in an Eastern European folk culture but in an Asian folk art ideal. While this mural project could be understood as

[111] Charles R. Watrall, 1977, 21.

appropriation due to a history of Japanese-Western power imbalances, and yet another example of Orientalist practices, in fact the post-WWII worldwide promotion of the *Mingei* philosophy tied to Japanese art and religion confounds a simple reading of it using this paradigm. More to the point, these two murals are examples of a "Reverse Orientalism" confronting British colonialism and Canada's own contribution to Orientalist histories.[112]

[112] For a documentation and discussion of Japanese-Canadian experiences in the twentieth-century see Maryka Omatsu, *Bittersweet Passage: Redress and the Japanese Canadian Experience*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005) and Canadian Race Relations Foundation, "From Racism to Redress: The Japanese-Canadian Experience," accessed 31 May 2014, http://www.crr.ca/diversfiles/en/pub/faSh/ePubFaShRacRedJap.pdf.

CONCLUSION

How the Sturdy-Stone Centre mural project exhibits agency within social, cultural, economic and political contexts is teased apart by turning to an interdisciplinary approach that takes into account the enmeshed biographies of these murals, their makers, the commissioning agency and the building. Such a methodology allows processes of co-constitution to come to light, along with the discovery of multiple hybrid group formations agential in the development and reception of the murals and the people implicated in their coming-into-being. In particular, the sociology of associations, or ANT, with its concerns about group reconstitutions has provided a framework to address how the social is constructed by means of a variety of agents involving and including the murals. Post-phenomenology that emphasizes interfaces where action actually occurs and the resulting co-constitution of the actors, has allowed the reinsertion of the human agent into this process without privileging the subject over the object. The dialogical method has shown how the murals gather concepts usually considered antithetical, such as the modern and vernacular, art and craft, craft and architecture, the local and global, and rural and urban and in turn reconfigured them.

These murals were a result of, and have contributed to, the professionalization of ceramic practice in Canada. How the makers creatively improvised in the face of the challenges arising from the seepage of monumentality depended upon their own biographies, including professional and student experiences. Within this process of professionalization, skill is tied to creative improvisation emerging from contacts among materials, people, tools, architectural space, and even more ephemeral entities, such as weather. Close examination of the manner in which clay, equipment, and stylistic vocabularies came together and were manipulated opens a path to understanding what these murals do and how they do it. By turning to ANT and postphenomenology, I have considered group membership to include both humans and non-humans involving things and objects, organizations, ideas, and processes, and then accounted for these hybrid group formations. Thus, the life stories of the murals emerge and their sociability from their inception is traced. Taking into account actual physical and cultural interfaces where actions were realized and where things and people make each other allows the particular mechanisms involved in the making and reception of the murals to be elaborated. Thus intention as expressed through the physical appearances of the murals has been taken into account, not as

originating in the maker alone, but rather as emerging from actions where the muralist, the clay, tools, equipment and space came into contact, implying skill and the creativity of improvisation. As such, artistic intention can now be understood as arising from multiple and hybrid group formations of which the maker is one component, and the audience another. In terms of reception the physical attributes of the works are located in architectural spaces experienced by people who bring their own histories to them. By tracing this reception or lack of it for the project and the individual murals, this study speaks to how the murals contributed to political, cultural, and even economic issues of this period. This current research embeds these eight murals within the discourses of ceramic, craft, sculpture, architecture, and decorative art histories and the disciplines of material culture, anthropology, and sociology. The idea of the culture of clay and "ceramicness," has opened up opportunities to examine how these murals arose from and contributed to an already entrenched history of the material in Saskatchewan, and the history of ceramics in architecture.

A formal analysis of the murals has brought to light their ornamental and decorative features and their stylistic references. How each mural and the mural collective interfaced with people through their content, colour, line, volume, light, location, and artistic vocabulary affected their reception, relocating intention to the interface of the mural and its public. In order to fulfill the government's mandate to represent Saskatchewan life in an effective manner, the murals needed to be sensual and delightful, or at least intriguing, in order to attract the attention of their audience. Only once they had such attention would their ideological content be noticed or recognized. In this sense, visual and material delight and the social and political are co-constituted at the interface of the murals and their public as part of critical spatial practice. These murals serve to improve the social/emotional needs of the people who interact with them while transmitting the ideological ideals of the government who commissioned them. They were not only dependent upon, but are actors in, the formation and transmission of concepts such as multiculturalism, socialism, urbanization, globalization, regionalism, environmentalism, rural ideals, and in the processes of professionalism in craft, ceramics, applied arts, and architecture.

The Sturdy Stone Centre's collection of eclectic murals defies the design unity architects wished to impose on their buildings, but in so doing has opened up a multivocality that otherwise would be absent, initiating dialogues that enrich the space of the building, the city, and the province. The murals as individuals perform in the Sturdy-Stone Centre as a public statement of

the professionalism and individualism of their makers who each presented a unique view of what it was to be part of Saskatchewan during that period. To the building's public they communicated aspects of the cultural and social values of the Blakeney NDP government, bringing together within a dialogical relationship the rural into urban, tradition into the modern, collaboration into individuality. The political and cultural values emerging from this government's ideology and actions were carried into the future by means of this mural program on and in the Sturdy-Stone Centre.

By taking into account the physical juxtaposition of what is considered a traditional material, ceramics, with a modern building material, reinforced concrete, this dissertation has argued for an ideological link that establishes a dialogical relationship within the fabric of the building. The image of the province as modern represented through the brutalist style of the building and the immense modernist abstract exterior murals is at least partially contradicted by the eclectic mix of the six interior murals that include elements of narration and aesthetic styles found in folk art. At the same time these two kinds of art, fine and folk, were being integrated into mainstream art discourse of the 1960s through the 1980s, challenging easy distinctions between rural and urban, craft and art, amateur and professional. Images of the land, including the polychrome low relief landscape abstraction of the east-facing exterior mural, the monochrome terra cotta undulating wheat field or bursting sunflower on the west-facing exterior mural, the heraldic representations of Saskatchewan flora and fauna on the second floor and the prairie field on the tenth testify to the importance of rural Saskatchewan as an identity marker at a time when the province's population was becoming urbanized. This uneasy relationship is particularly expressed in the reception of *The Old Working Class* above the first floor elevators. Ethnic or cultural and even class markers are evident in this mural and even more subtly in the tenth floor mural, betraying the complex negotiations involved around Saskatchewan and Canadian multiculturalist agendas at this period. The limits of multiculturalism also become clear. Ceramic cultural practices from Japan, United States of America, Europe, and Britain were integrated into the styles, skills, and tools used in the making of these murals, highlighting the cultural and physical mobility of the ceramicists that encouraged the cosmopolitan image of the province. At a time when ceramics was considered to be not as modern a sculptural material as plastic, concrete, metal, or multi-media, the connections between these murals and global ceramic practices work to reinforce their validity in modern architectural spaces.

With the increasing interdisciplinarity of craft and art practices, skills specific to particular mediums are threatened, often regarded as trivial or obsolete, especially as idea and concept are often privileged over material and technique. One important contribution of this current research is to assure some of the skills related to working in a particular material are passed on to other generations.[1] These ceramic relief murals emerged from a time where architectural adornment, whether ornamental or decorative, had been shunned, and knowledge of material requirements, design limitations, and organizational skills used in its making had declined, if not disappeared altogether. Although this period endured for only half a century, it meant each of the muralists had little experience to rely upon, and with scant information were forced to improvise, in some cases committing costly mistakes along the way. The collective knowledge accumulated by these experiences and their resulting objects is a contribution to architectural, craft, and ceramic histories; as such this case study looks to the past to offer tools for the future ceramicist and architect. The methodological interdisciplinarity of this case study has emerged from and supports disciplinarity in art histories and material practices.

This current research has taken into considertaion the physicality of the murals and their attachment to the building's surface. While the masonry expert Jake Ketler is convinced these objects, although built for permanency, could be removed if necessary, he has recognized it would be a challenging task.[2] This research considers the importance of physical interfaces between the building and the murals, and between the cultures of materials, concerns usually outside the purview of craft, art and architectural histories, or consigned to conservationists. Hopefully this research contributes to mural conservation and to a better understanding of the integration of ceramics into architectural spaces as past and future projects. The ephemeral or permanent nature of public art is an important consideration when assessing the materiality of projects and their material interfaces, concerns not prevalent at the time of the Sturdy-Stone Centre project.

Ceramic relief murals form a relatively new field of inquiry within craft, art, architectural and ceramic histories, and thus provide many interesting opportunities for further research. Some might include: more case studies of integration into particular architectural spaces and places;

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[1] An example of two such a projects originating in the United States are: Stan Bitters, *Environmental Ceramics,* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976); Peter King, *Architectural Ceramics for the Studio Potter: Designing, Building, Installing*, (North Carolina: Lark Books, 1999).
[2] Jake Ketler, interview by the author, Saskatoon, 26 May 2011.

contextualizing them within an artist's oeuvre among works comprising a variety of materials; a consideration of production circumstances that extend from studio to industry; and varying approaches to ceramic studio practices in conjunction with architectural materials. Case studies involving specific modernist buildings are suggested by the Montréal métro ceramic murals and tiling executed by Claude Vermette found in several stations 1966-1976; the Eaton murals by Maurice Savoie for three Eaton stores in Montreal, Laval and Anjou, 1966 -1973; the several murals executed by Lorraine Malach for a variety of Catholic religious spaces including retreat houses, schools, parish churches and a cathedral 1963-2000; and the numerous public school murals executed in Québec 1950s-1970s. This kind of focussed research takes into consideration the interactions of the murals within their specific architectural spaces. An accumulation of such research facilitates evaluating the impact of social, physical, cultural, political, and economic circumstances over a wide range of examples with a view to identifying vulnerable productions and protecting them, and even suggesting new initiatives. Certainly a concern regarding these murals that are attached to walls is the lifespan of concrete buildings and their deterioration, as well as the reuse and refurbishment of historical and modernist buildings. Already some murals of this post-WWII period have been removed with many destroyed or damaged in the process, either by accident or design; we need to understand in what circumstances the murals have been either retained in situ, or if removed, preserved.[3] This line of inquiry turns on one of Verbeek's questions: "how can stronger bonds be fostered between people and the artifacts around them?"[4] He suggests strategies should include: an assurance the object ages slowly and in a dignified way, support and repair for the objects, considerations of how sign-character of products and their scripts might be used to extend their service, which is related to preserving or modifying their stories.[5] This last point relates to how, among other things, murals are tied to people including their makers. Although these works, as art, are supposedly protected, in some cases the public profile of the maker as artist influences decisions regarding the murals' fate, or the murals

[3] Two of Savoie's Eaton murals, those in Laval and Anjou were removed and destroyed when the Eaton Company went into bankruptcy. Vermette's small white concave tiling arranged in an intricate rhythmical design to dress the walls of the Place des Arts métro station in Montréal was removed rather than repaired. A campaign is now underway to finance the removal of Malach's untitled ceramic relief mural, representing the founding of the Franciscans, from the refurbished and re-used former Franciscan Friary in Edmonton. Renewed interest in this mural coincided with the installation of Francis I as Pope.

[4] Peter-Paul Verbeek, *What Things Do: Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency and Design*, trans. Robert P. Crease, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 220.

[5] Ibid, 223.

are not readily identifiable as art in terms of current practices. Situating relief murals within an artist's oeuvre opens up a sustained inquiry into relationships to similar ceramic relief works, other kinds of artistic production, other materials, and other art works. When these links are made, stories emerge that could impact the murals' lives. An example of where this might be useful is Vermette's production of individually glazed concave tiles he assembled to create undulating relief surfaces on exterior and interior walls of a variety of buildings such as the Saint Laurent Montréal métro station and the Hôtel de Ville in Drummondville. Others include Savoie's incised and built-up terra cotta relief surfaces, first made within a brickyard and then in his studio, enlivening several Québec public spaces such as Radio Canada and the Sûreté de Québec headquarters; or Jordi Bonet's surrealist monumental ceramic murals in a palette ranging from sombre smokiness to water-colour like pastels found throughout the United States and Canada, including *The End of Time* in the Ontario Government Building offices in Toronto, 1966, or the mural in Guinness Tower in Vancouver, 1969. Malach's murals suggest the need for a recuperative feminist approach that should include the work of several women ceramic muralists, such as Toronto's Greta Dale whose oeuvre included a monumental ceramic relief for the Centennial Concert Hall, Winnipeg. A sustained inquiry about women's mural production promises to situate them as significant, even if rare, players in this field.

Another research approach emerges from material culture and would consider how the murals are integrated into a variety of processes regarding their coming-into-being and what they subsequently do within networks of associations. Different kinds of mural projects involve various interfaces between studio and industrial practices within a range of architectural spaces. Vermette, Savoie and Bonet explored such practices and spaces in several ways: contracting out industrial tile formation, working within an industrial space to create an original work of art, collaborating with industry and architects in tile designs and manufacture, and assembling a large workshop with several employees. The impact of these processes on the life cycle of the ceramic tile would be a fruitful line of inquiry to evaluate how they can and do interact with people and hence assess their physical and discursive vulnerability.

Within the parameters of material culture, the idea of the relief mural as gift offers another interesting field of investigation also linked to mural preservation. A research project might draw upon recent approaches to the gift as processes enmeshed in social, economic and

material formations.[6] As gifting can be considered a component of exchange interactions, it would take into account anthropology's broadened approach around exchange to include "the place and time of the transaction" and "its antecedents and consequences."[7] This would recognize the murals move between commodity and gift status, occupying both at various points in their "lives."[8] Exchange theory in material culture has recently identified gifting as integral to the construction of social and cultural identities through interconnections among people, things, emotions, and ideas.[9] Two themes that could drive this research currently exist "uneasily" in sociological discourse around gifting: the "'moral cement' approach [where] the emphasis is on the uniting effects of gift giving;" and the view "where gifts may be conceptualized as a means to exercise and influence power."[10] Examples of mural gift scenarios could include the community as donor and receiver, philanthropy, the artist as donor of works, or "artistic vision" based upon particular "talents" as gifts. Research for this case study indicated how murals are enmeshed in gifting practices. Examples can be found within Malach's oeuvre where money for ecclesiastic ceramic murals was raised through donations or the murals' transportation was dependent upon volunteerism, a gift of time and energy. Others such as Sures' *Air, Earth, Water and Fire*, 1989 for the Canadian Museum of Civilization, or Bonet's *Hommage à Gaudí* were based upon private philanthropic interventions.

A Canadian survey of ceramic murals might embed late twentieth century ceramic murals within a history of architectural ceramics in Canada.[11] This would encompass terra cotta works from the late-nineteenth century through the early-twentieth century tied to the beaux arts, art

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[6] James G. Carrier, "Exchange," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer, (Los Angeles: Sage, 2006), 376.
[7] Carrier, 380.
[8] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: commodities and politics of value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11-13; Igor Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process," in Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 68, 73.
[9] David Cheal, *The Gift Economy,* (London and New York: Routledge: 1988), 5, 22, 24.
[10] Aafke E. Komter, "The social and psychological significance of gift giving in the Netherlands," in *The Gift: an interdisciplinary perspective,* ed. Aafke Komter, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 107; Mark Osteen, "Introducing: questions of the gift," in *The Question of the Gift: Essays across disciplines,* ed. Mark Osteen, (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 7.
[11] Three surveys from c1981-82 of the integration of craft into architecture into architecture of the western states of the United States and public buildings in Ontario and Québec serve as a excellent models. Bridget Beattie McCarthy, *Architectural Crafts: A Handbook and a Catalogue*, (Seattle: Madrona, 1982); Jeanne Parkin, *Art in Architecture: Art for the Built Environment in the Province of Ontario*, ed. William J.S. Boyle, (Toronto: Visual Arts Ontario, 1982); Gouvernement du Québec, Les oeuvres d'art du Ministère des travaux publics et de l'approvisionnement ou la politique du un per cent, (Québec: Ministère des communications, direction générale des publications gouvernementales, 1981).

nouveau, and art deco styles, ceramic cladding associated with modernism, and relief and glazed tile work of the latter part of the twentieth century emerging form the studio ceramic movement. Such a survey affords a wide view of the applications and expressions of the material, and makes available precedents for contemporary adaptation. Canadian ceramic relief murals form a visually and discursively rich body of work open to many avenues of research. This case study of the ceramic relief mural project of the Sturdy-Stone Centre provides an interdisciplinary model for mural scholarship assuring that a vital aspect of Canadian cultural production is justly recognized.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Letter of Introduction

Brigham Quebec
May 27, 2011

Dear _____

I am a PhD student at Concordia University, Montreal Quebec. I also am a part time instructor at Concordia University. I have been a practicing professional ceramist for over 25 years working within Studio Surette, and have published essays in journals and books and given conference papers on Canadian ceramic history.

I am conducting art historical research on Canadian Ceramic Relief Murals created after 1960 that will be used for my PhD dissertation and future publication. The murals I am investigating include ceramic relief murals by Claude Vermette, Jordi Bonet, Maurice Savoie, and Lorraine Malach, as well as those found in the Sturdy-Stone Centre in Saskatoon by Jack Sures, Greg Hardy/Randy Woolsey, Lorraine Malach, Victor Cicansky and Robert Billyard.

My research objectives are to answer the following questions: How do historical theories of decorative arts, craft, sculpture, and architecture contribute to marginalizing twentieth century ceramic murals within art historical discourse? Does current theory open up discursive space for such artistic production? How were the production and reception of the mid-twentieth century Canadian murals, affected by these historical theories? How did and do these ceramic murals contribute to our social identities through their situation within the cultural, political and social discourses current at the time of their production and installation and now? Can and should their cultural, social and political roles be re-evaluated?

This research is supervised by Dr. Elaine C. Paterson, Department of Art History Concordia University. She can be contacted at:
Department Art History, E.V. 3809, Concordia University, 1455, de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3G 1M8
Tel: (514) 848-2424 Ext; 4605; Email: elaine.paterson@concordia.ca

I would like to ask you some questions regarding these murals. I am providing you with a preliminary list of questions for you to consider. I am also providing you with a consent form to sign if you agree to the interview.

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and reflections.

Regards,
Susan Surette
279 ave. des Erables
Brigham, Qc.
J2K 4C8 Tel: 450-263-5696 Email: studio.surette@videotron.ca

Appendix 2

Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN
Canadian Ceramic Relief Mural Research

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Susan Surette, Department of Art History of Concordia University, 279 ave. des Erables, Brigham, Qc. J2K 4C8, Tel: 450-263-5696; Email: studio.surette@videotron.ca

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: To procure information on the designing, creation, installation, and reception of ceramic relief murals. This includes any information related to their inspiration and the meaning behind the work.

B. PROCEDURES

The research will be conducted at a time and in a place that is convenient for the interviewee. The interviewee will be asked to answer some questions about the ceramic works, and will be free to add any commentary they wish. The time dedicated to the interview will be determined by the interviewee's wishes. The interviewee will be identified as a source for publication purposes, if they give consent.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no discernable risks or potential benefits for the interviewee.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is

  NON-CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., my identity will be revealed in study results)
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME(please print)_____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's supervisor:
Dr. E.C. Paterson,
Department of Art History, E.V. 3809, Concordia University, 1455, de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3G 1M8
Tel: (514) 848-2424 Ext; 4605; Email: elaine.paterson@concordia.ca

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix 3

Questions for Jack Sures' paid workers who contributed to the
Sturdy-Stone Centre west façade mural

Questions regarding the Jack Sures Sturdy Stone Centre mural project

Submitted by:
Susan Surette, PhD candidate, department of Art History, Concordia University
279 ave. des Erables, Brigham, Quebec, J2K4C8
Tel: 450-263-5696
Email: studio.surette@videotron.ca

1. In what capacity were you hired to work on the Sures Sturdy Stone mural?

2. How long did you work on the Sures Sturdy Stone mural?

3. Were you working or studying at the time, and did you continue to work or study while you were participating in this the mural project?

4. Did you bring any skills to the project that you had previously acquired in art school or elsewhere? What were they, if any?

5. What were some of the challenges you found while being involved in this project, including: physical, time-management, social, technical, material, etc.?

6. How did you feel about the experience when your job was finished?

7. Has this feeling changed over time and, if so, can you explain in what sense? Can you attribute these changes (if any) in feelings/perceptions to specific events or subsequent experiences in your life?

8. Did working on this mural affect your subsequent art career in any manner? This might include style choices, projects, organizational considerations, adoption or rejection of techniques and/or equipment, choice of medium, etc.

9. Do you think those who worked on the project should be given public credit?

10. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about your relationship to this project and the people involved?

Appendix 4

Research papers on Concrete in Canada
Compiled in Chronological Order
Available through the National Research Council of Canada Website

Hutcheon, N.B. "Fundamental Considerations in the Design of Exterior Walls for Buildings." Technical Report No. 13, Division of Building Research, Ottawa, 1953. Reprint from a paper presented before the 67th annual general and professional meeting of the Engineering Institute of Canada, Halifax, May 1953.

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Appendix 5

List of Canadian Research Articles on Brick and Stone Facing on Concrete Buildings
Compiled in Chronological Order
Available through the National Research Council of Canada Website

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